

# NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR. By

John Buchan.

Volume XXI. The Fourth Winter of War.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, LTD.  
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK



## CONTENTS.

---

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| CXLV. FROM THE BAINSIZZA TO CAPO-                                 |     |
| RETTO . . . . .   | 9   |
| CXLVI. ITALY'S STAND ON THE PIAVE . .                             | 37  |
| CXLVII. THE SITUATION ON THE TIGRIS,<br>AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM | 58  |
| CXLVIII. THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI . . . .                            | 93  |
| CXLI. THE CONQUEST OF EAST AFRICA . .                             | 125 |
| CL. THE EXTREMITY OF RUSSIA . . . .                               | 167 |
| CLI. POLITICAL REACTIONS . . . . .                                | 205 |

---

## APPENDICES.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| I. THE BRITISH FORCE IN ITALY . .                                | 233 |
| II. EVENTS IN MESOPOTAMIA AFTER<br>THE CAPTURE OF BAGDAD . . . . | 241 |
| III. THE OCCUPATION OF JERUSALEM . .                             | 263 |
| IV. THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI . . . .                                | 288 |
| V. THE CAVALRY AT CAMBRAI . . . .                                | 318 |
| VI. THE CONQUEST OF KILIMANJARO                                  | 322 |
| VII. THE ADVANCE TO THE RUFIFI . . . .                           | 343 |



## LIST OF MAPS.

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| The Gaza-Beersheba Front . . . . .  | 72       |
| The Defences of Beersheba . . . . .   | 75       |
| The Advance to Jerusalem . . . . .  | 80       |
| The Fight for the Neby Samwil Position and the Capture<br>of Jerusalem . . . . .  | 83       |
| Jerusalem. . . . .  | 86       |
| Jerusalem.—Sketch showing the size of the City (plan of<br>the walls superposed on an outline plan of part of<br>West London drawn to the same scale) . . . . . | 90       |
| Sketch showing the Advance of the Infantry Divisions on<br>November 20 . . . . .  | 101      |
| Sketch showing the Progress of the Infantry Divisions on<br>November 21 . . . . .   | 106      |
| Bourlon Wood . . . . .  | 110      |
| Battle of Cambrai.—Map showing the front from which the<br>British attack was made (Nov. 20, 1917), and the<br>greatest extent of ground gained . . . . .       | 113      |
| Battle of Cambrai.—The German Counter-attack on No-<br>vember 30, and the British Retirement . . . . .  | 117      |
| Africa, showing (by the shaded boundary) the region in-<br>cluded in the German Colonial Office Map of Mittel-<br>Afrika (Berlin, 1917) . . . . .               | 128      |
| German East Africa . . . . .  | 132, 133 |
| The Forcing of the Kilimanjaro Gap.—Sketch showing<br>relation of the Gap to the frontier region . . . . .  | 138      |
| Van Deventer's March towards the Central Railway . . . . .  | 142      |
| The March down the Pangani . . . . .  | 145      |
| The Advance across the Central Railway . . . . .  | 150      |
| East Africa.—Sketch showing the general scheme of the<br>operations . . . . .   | 157      |
| The Operations in the South-East of German East Africa<br>in the Winter of 1916 and 1917 . . . . .  | 160, 161 |
| The Break-up of Russia . . . . .  | 184      |

# NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR.

---

## CHAPTER CXLV.

### FROM THE BAINSIZZA TO CAPORETTO.

Cadorna's Problem in the Summer of 1917—Difficulties of Assistance from the Allies—The "Laibach Scheme"—Its Impossibility—The New Italian Offensive—Position on the Isonzo—The Attack of 18th August—The Capture of Bainsizza Plateau—The Attack on the Carso—The Attack upon Monte San Gabriele—End of Italian Offensive—Ludendorff's Plan—The New Tactics—The Fourteenth German Army, under Otto von Below, comes to Italy—Enemy Propaganda in Italy—The German Plan of Battle—Debate in the Italian Parliament—Fall of the Boselli Government—The Surprise Attack of 24th October—The Break at Caporetto—The Bainsizza evacuated—Fall of the Matajur Ridge—Cadorna's *Communiqué*—Von Below debouches into the Friulian Plain—The Third Italian Army retires from the Carso—The Austrians re-enter Gorizia.

AFTER midsummer 1917, Cadorna was compelled to reconsider with care his whole plan of campaign. The bold and strenuous offensive which he had conducted for two years on 470 miles of front had taken his lines almost everywhere inside the enemy borders ; but since the frontier had been long before designed by Austria not for defence but for offence, mere gain of ground had not

brought him near a decision. In May and June he had won conspicuous strategical points ; but clearly this battle in sections could not continue for ever. He reviewed his forces, and found them too weak in artillery for what was pre-eminently a war of guns. The struggle among the hills of the Carso and the Isonzo was costly, and the enemy, refreshed with drafts from the Russian front, was now the quicker of the two sides to recover from losses. But he believed that beyond San Gabriele and the Iron Gates of the Carso lay a mighty prize for the conqueror—not a city or a province alone, but the destruction of Austria's fighting power. For such a prize he needed the help of his allies, and accordingly the second stage of his summer offensive, which had been originally fixed for July, was postponed till the matter could be discussed in Paris and London.

There was as yet no Allied War Council in permanent session, so the affair resolved itself into informal negotiations with the governments of France and Britain. Cadorna's proposal was modest and soldierlike. He asked for batteries, and for such troops as could be spared from the French and Flanders front, in order to produce a momentum which would result not in the gain of a ridge or a peak, but the clearing of the way to Trieste and open warfare. Unfortunately, the Allies were already committed to extensive operations. Haig had his great Flanders attack, for which the plans had long been laid, and Pétain was nursing back his armies to offensive vigour with a view to attacks at Verdun and Malmaison. Certain British batteries were allotted at once to Cadorna, and certain French batteries were promised in a month's time. But

no infantry could be spared till the main Western operations were over, and by that time the season would be too late for Cadorna's scheme. In this refusal there was no lack of good will towards Italy, or of admiration for her brilliant campaigning. On purely military grounds it was right to put the emphasis on the Western front. There stood Germany, the great enemy, and no defeat of Austria in the field would strike at the heart of the German power. It was abundantly clear that the Dual Monarchy, even if it wished, could not break from its entanglements; and though the Italian flag had waved over Trieste by September, little would have been won towards the main purpose of the war. For the Allies to forego their assault upon the German line and to concentrate with Italy against Austria would have been to ignore the true centre of gravity in the campaign.

In view of what happened later, it is important to make this point clear, for there were many critics—civilians, for the most part—who saw in the refusal a prime strategic blunder. With Allied help, they said, Cadorna might have stormed his way to Trieste and Laibach, and have repeated the exploit of Napoleon in 1797. The answer to such fantasies is that, even if he had, it would not have produced any real decision, and it would have exposed the Flanders and French fronts to a perilous German counterstroke. Moreover, the Napoleon of 1797 was a dangerous object of imitation. His plan was militarily unsound. He succeeded by bluff rather than by strategy. Had Thugut and the civilians in Vienna not lost their nerve and overruled the Archduke Charles, it is more than likely that Bonaparte's

career would have ended in disaster among the Styrian hills.\*

\* The position of Bonaparte in 1797 deserves a note. In 1796, while the Archduke Charles foiled the attempts of Jourdan and Moreau to advance on Vienna from the Rhine, Bonaparte in Italy had forced Piedmont to make peace, had occupied Lombardy, and had besieged Mantua. On February 2, 1797, Mantua fell, and the Archduke Charles, now on the Piave and heavily outnumbered, believed that Bonaparte would march into Tyrol and join hands with the French on the Rhine. Joubert's force of 20,000, then at Trent, looked like the vanguard of such a movement. Bonaparte, however, resolved to march on Vienna by the Mur and Mürz valleys and the Semmering pass. On 16th March he was across the Tagliamento, while the Archduke Charles retreated by Gorizia towards Laibach, detaching small Austrian forces to hold the passes on the Fella and at Plezzo. Bonaparte reached Gorizia on 19th March, and ordered Massena to advance on Tarvis, Guyeux to move by Cividale and Caporetto, and Serrurier to march up the east bank of the Isonzo—all three divisions to meet at Tarvis, while Bernadotte was to follow the Archduke. By 24th March Bonaparte reached Tarvis, where he found the three divisions; while the Archduke, followed by Bernadotte, crossed the Loibl pass and reached Klagenfurt on 28th March. That day Bonaparte advanced from Tarvis and occupied Villach, while the Archduke retired from Klagenfurt through St. Veit. The pursuit continued up the Mur valley, the Austrians fighting rearguard actions, till on 6th April the Archduke reached Bruck at the junction of the Mur and the Mürz. His forces were increasing, and he hoped to make a stand west of the Semmering pass. Bonaparte was clearly anxious, and at the end of March had made a proposal to Austria for peace; for he had news of a rising in his rear, and he knew that to force the Semmering would be a difficult task. The statesmen in Vienna were still more alarmed, and, against the wishes of the Archduke, concluded an armistice on 7th April. On 18th April the preliminaries of peace were signed at Leoben. Bonaparte had won by successful bluff, without the crucial test of a fight for the Semmering. He had assets which were not with Cadorna in 1917. He began

Cadorna was therefore left to his own resources. He had many difficulties in his way. He was fighting against time, for the fiasco in Galicia in July had proved beyond doubt that Russia must be written off the Allied list of assets, and that the trickle of Austrian troops from Galicia would presently become a steady flow. His men were weary, for the strain of the Italian fighting was almost beyond the endurance of flesh and blood. No progress could be made except at the expense of desperate valour and suffering; and to hold the positions won, as was proved by the Alpini's brilliant exploit in June on the Ortigara, was scarcely less costly than to win them. The bravest soldiers in the world will grow dispirited when they see their best efforts still far from any tangible victory. Moreover, the country behind him was full of danger signals. There was industrial trouble in Milan and Turin. The civil Government was out of favour; the Prime Min-

with far superior numbers, and knew that the Austrians could not hold the river crossings against him or delay more than a few days his march into Carinthia. Even if we assume that Cadorna had been able to reach Klagenfurt, the strategy of the Archduke would still have been available for the enemy with increased advantages. For a stand in the western Semmering valley Austria would have had as a main line of supply the Semmering railway, and, as lines for flank forces to hold the ridges of the Styrian Alps, the lines from Linz and Salzburg on the right and the line from Hungary by Gratz on the left. Cadorna's advance would have been into an ugly re-entrant between high mountain walls. Further, in 1917 the Austrians had a united command and interior lines, while in 1797 there was no such unity of command, and there was imminent peril from Hoche's large army on the Rhine. The campaign is fully discussed in General von Horsetzky's *Feldzüge der letzten 100 Jahre*.

ister, Boselli, was an old man of eighty; and Orlando, the Minister of the Interior, had shown little firmness in handling domestic discontents. The land was full of pacifist talk, and, in spite of Cadorna's appeal, nothing had been done to check peace propaganda among the troops. Italy's heavy losses made only too good a text for such discourses, and the Vatican Peace Note, especially the phrase about "useless slaughter," was used to give the weak-kneed and treacherous elements among the people the impression that they had the support of the Holy See. Cadorna's new offensive, therefore, carried the political as well as the military fortunes of Italy. He must succeed greatly and soon, or there was danger of losing all.

There were three main redoubts which might be regarded as the keys of the Austrian front between Plezzo and the sea. One was the Lom position, guarding on the south the enemy bridgehead at Tolmino and the Idria and Baca valleys, by the latter of which ran the railway to Vienna. The second was Monte San Gabriele, the key of the Ternovanerwald, which, till it was won, barred Italy's progress east of Gorizia. The third was Hermada, on the seashore. Of the three, San Gabriele was the most vital and the most difficult. It might be turned, but it could not be taken by direct assault. It was, accordingly, Cadorna's intention to "feel" a long length of the enemy front by a general attack to find where, if anywhere, lay the weak spot. Once that was found, the attack could be pressed hard with the object of winning ultimately one or other of the three keys. It was the greatest effort made by Italy since the fall

of Gorizia. The summer battles of 1917 had been on short fronts, and had lasted only for a few days. This was an operation on a line of thirty miles, and it was meant, if successful, to continue till the first snowfall.

At Gorizia the Isonzo bends to the north-west, and then in a wide curve to the north-east towards Tolmino. At the first bend Monte Santo towers above the eastern bank, and below it the Chiapovano valley makes a break in the rim of hills. South of that valley runs the chain of Monte San Gabriele and Monte San Daniele, the northern defence of the Gorizian plain. North and north-west of it, beginning from Monte Santo, is the line of heights on the left bank of the Isonzo, running to where the Baca valley enters from the east below the hill of Santa Lucia. The battles of May had given Cadorna all the hills above the river north of the Chiapovano valley as far as Plava, with the exception of Monte Santo. The enemy still held San Gabriele and the ridges south and east of it. Between the Chiapovano and the Baca valleys a loop of the river enclosed a high broken region called the Bainsizza plateau, bounded on the west by the hills lining the Isonzo. This upland was cut by glens descending to the Isonzo, and had many peaks and subsidiary plateaux; but it formed a region where transport was comparatively easy, and its possession was the key of the Austrian position above the river. If it could be carried, Monte Santo would fall, and San Gabriele and the other heights of the Ternovannerwald might be turned in flank. Cadorna held the eastern rim of the Isonzo valley from Plava to just short of Monte Santo. North of Plava the

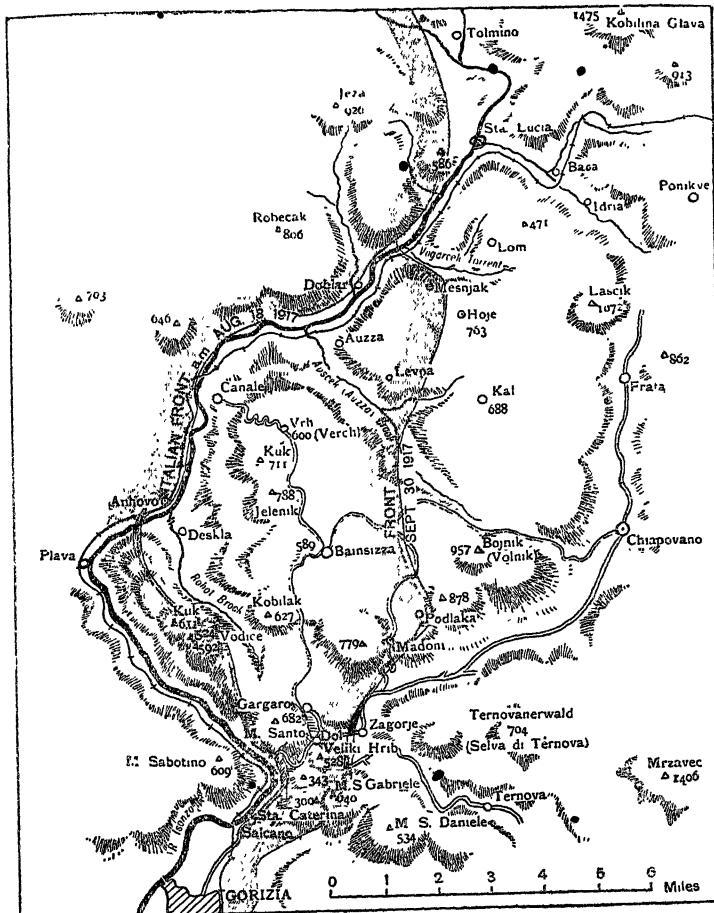
Austrians were on the west bank. It was clear that the Bainsizza could not be won by an advance from the narrow front of Kuk and Vodice. The eastern rim must be carried north of Plava to allow of a broad front and a converging attack.

On the morning of Saturday, 18th August, in hot, clear weather, a great bombardment began

*Aug. 18.* along the whole line from Tolmino to the sea. In the afternoon Capello's Second Army moved north-east from Plava, and seized the foot of the little Rohot valley, which divides Monte Kuk from the Bainsizza plateau. That night the work of crossing the river from Plava to Santa Lucia was begun. It was no light task to force that swift moat, where at every easy crossing-place were strong Austrian machine-gun

*Aug. 19.* posts. By dawn on the 19th fourteen bridges had been constructed; and during the morning, while mist lay thick in the gorges, the Italians broke through the front line of the enemy defence. Half-way up the slopes they met the second line of caverns and redoubts. On the crest was a third line; while behind it, radiating from the central peak of Jelenik, was a strong support system. The frontal Italian attack pushed up the Rohot glen, but found a stubborn resistance in the reserve position behind Descla. Meantime on their left the 1st and 5th Bersaglieri brigades, advancing between Canale and the Avscek gorge, pierced the enemy defence north of Jelenik, and by the evening gained a position from the Avscek to the hill called Kuk 711. Further north the eastern rim of the valley was won opposite Doblar, but beyond that the precipitous fall of the hills to the river from the Lom

# THE BAINSIZZA TO CAPORETTO. 17



The Italian Advance on the Bainsizza Plateau (Aug.-Sept., 1917).

plateau prevented an extension northward of the front of attack. The Lom was vital, for it dominated Tolmino and the Baca and Idria valleys; but the only

way to it was from the Avscek glen by way of the small Kal plateau. After heavy fighting the Italians won the western edge of the Kal from Levpa to Mesnjak, but between them and the Lom was still the deep wooded gorge of the Vogercek torrent.

South of Gorizia the Duke of Aosta's Third Army was not less hotly engaged. The 23rd Corps, under Diaz, carried the village of Selo, destroying the famous Austrian 12th Division, and in the Hermada section the ground was regained which had been lost in June to the Austrian counter-attack. In the northern part of the Carso progress was slower, though the Pallanza brigade won an important position south-east of Fajti Hrib. Elsewhere on the long front there were only artillery engagements. The first day taught Cadorna all he wanted. He now knew that the weak spot in the enemy's defence was on the heights of the Middle Isonzo, and he strove to increase his advantage before Boroevitch could bring up his reserves.

On Monday, 20th August, the 1st and 5th Bersaglieri brigades, with the Elba brigade in support,

*Aug. 20.* had pushed east of Vrh and Kuk 711,

and turned the Jelenik position. It fell the next day, after a fine resistance, and the Italians

*Aug. 21.* poured through the gap across the Bain-

sizza. For the moment it seemed as if in this section open warfare had been restored. On the

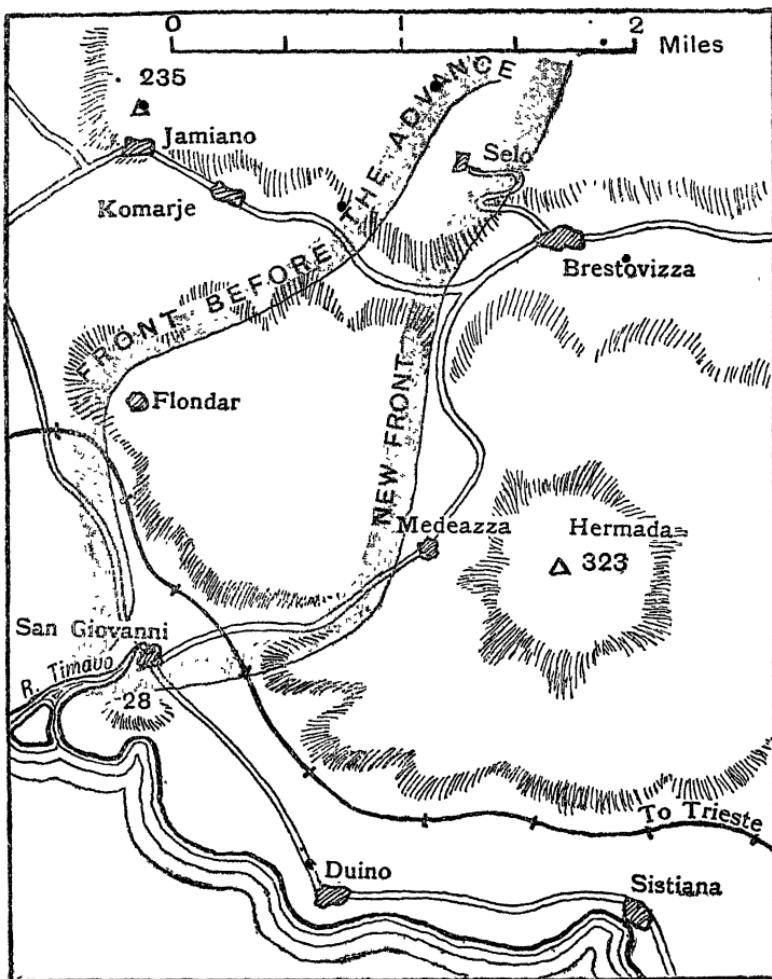
*Aug. 23.* morning of the 23rd the Florence and

Udine brigades attacked to the east of the Rohot glen against the height of Kobilek, while other troops advanced east of Vodice and drove the enemy into the Concha di Gargaro, thereby threatening the rear of Monte Santo. That same

day, on the south, the Italians forced the saddle which separates Monte Santo from Monte San. Gabriele. The garrison on the former hill was now isolated, and on the following day, *Aug. 24.* the 24th, the place fell. On this, the sixth day of the battle, over 20,000 prisoners had been taken.

Capello was now moving freely across the Bain-sizza plateau. But his task was difficult, for he had few roads ; his transport had to climb the 2,000 feet of steep cliffs from the Isonzo ; the weather was scorching, water was scarce, and the enemy was fighting brilliant rearguard actions in the broken country. At the southern end the Austrians had been forced into the Chiapovano valley ; but further north the Italian advance was stayed at the hill of Volnik, some two miles west of the Chiapovano. It was inevitable that in an assault in such a terrain the Italian infantry should outrun their artillery, and the enemy was able to get off the bulk of his guns.

North of the Avscek glen there was a more serious check. General Badoglio, who in May had been responsible for the capture of Kuk and Vodice, was dispatched to take charge of the operations there ; but he found the Austrian artillery concentration so strong on the Lom plateau that even his energy could make no headway. On the 30th Cadorna sent in his cavalry at the southern end of the Chiapovano valley, in the hope of forcing the northern spurs of San Gabriele. The time for cavalry, however, had passed. The war of movement had ended, and the defence had found positions on which they could stand. The first



Italian Advance on the Carso, August 1917.

phase of the battle was over, and there was need for a pause and a readjustment. It was the same in the Carso, where during the first week the right of the

Third Army had won ground above San Giovanni di Duino and Medeazza, on the slopes of Hermada, and the 23rd Corps had broken through the main Austrian system from Kostanjevica across the Brestovica valley. There the advance halted, for some of the guns and reserves of the Third Army were needed for the struggle at San Gabriele.

The second phase began on 3rd September. San Gabriele was obviously in danger. Some time before, the Italians had worked their way up its southern spurs, Santa Caterina and Hill 343. The fall of Monte Santo had given them the Sella di Dol, the saddle between the two heights, and on the last day of August they had won Hill 526 and Veliki Hrib, and pushed along the northern ridge to point 552. San Gabriele is a long ridge, 646 metres at its highest point, which falls steeply towards Gorizia and towards the east and north, but on the west drops by gentler slopes to the Isonzo. The ridge at its widest is about 800 yards, and its total length is some 2,000. The actual summit is very steep, not unlike one of the *castrol* or saucepan hills common in South Africa. The place had been made one huge fortress, honeycombed with caverns and tunnels, and it now represented a promontory in the Austrian lines, surrounded by the Italians on three sides, and linked to the main front only on the north-east.

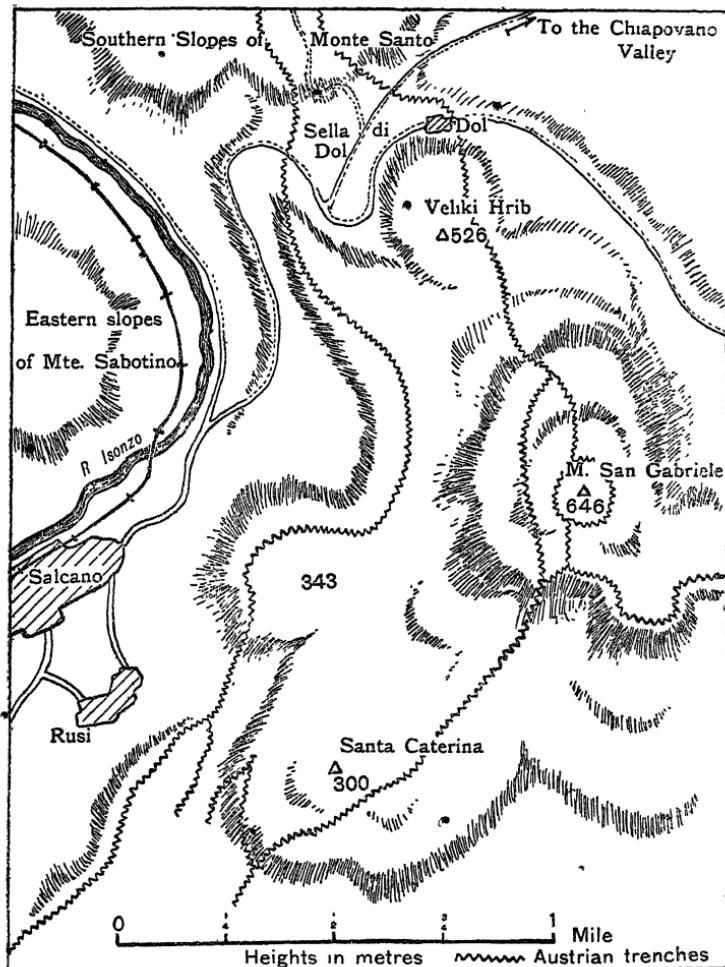
On 3rd September the place was in Cadorna's hands, except for the last few hundred yards below the summit. On the morning of that day he attacked with three columns—along the crest from Veliki Hrib, on the north-east slopes, and on the south just east of Santa Caterina. After a desperate

struggle the main part of the summit was carried—a fight for a natural fortress within as narrow limits of movement as any old battle for town or castle. The enemy could not allow the situation to remain as it was. The fall of San Gabriele meant the ultimate opening of the road from Gorizia to Trieste. For ten days one of the fiercest of the lesser battles of the war was waged on those few thousand square feet of rock and dust. Thirty-one fresh Austrian battalions were thrown into the *mélée*. The enemy forced the Italians off the top to a line just under the crest; then Cadorna's guns devastated the summit, and the Italians returned. It was a battle of appalling losses, for both defence and attack were implacable. By the middle of September the crest was roughly divided between Cadorna and Boroevitch, and the latter was entitled to claim that he had blocked the Italian movement which would have threatened his lines east of Gorizia.

On the other hand, the action at San Gabriele enabled Capello to consolidate his position on the Bainsizza plateau, which otherwise might have been precarious. There new roads were made for guns and supplies, water was provided, and trenches perfected, while every spare Austrian soldier was being used at San Gabriele. At the close of the month two successful local actions greatly improved the

*Sept. 28-* line. On 28th September an awkward Austrian position was captured on Veliki 29. Hrib, and on the 29th troops of the Venice and Tortona brigades made a useful advance south of Podlaka and Madoni at the south-east corner of the Bainsizza. During September, too, heavy Austrian counterstrokes were launched on the Carso

## THE BAINSIZZA TO CAPORETTO: 23



The Monte San Gabriele Position.

between Kostanjevica and the sea. In the northern part the 23rd Corps, assisted by a British group of

heavy howitzers, beat off all attacks ; but in the south the Italian right was compelled on 5th September once again to retire from the slopes of Hermada, and San Giovanni di Duino was lost. The Third Army did not attempt to recover the ground, for a great movement on Hermada was part of Cadorna's autumn plan when the campaign of the Second Army should be finished.

But by the end of September the Italian commander-in-chief had reluctantly come to the conclusion that he must relinquish those further plans. In a month's continuous battles he had achieved a very real success. He had taken well over 30,000 prisoners and large quantities of guns and *materiel*. The fighting of his men had been heroic beyond all praise, and San Gabriele must rank in history with those feats of arms which reveal the extreme tenacity of the human spirit. But he had paid a heavy price in his 155,000 casualties, though the enemy had lost correspondingly. His troops, too, suffered much from sickness, which brought the total casualties for the whole summer up to nearly three-quarters of a million. Boroevitch was being strongly reinforced from the derelict Russian front, and Cadorna feared the counterstroke which might follow any new assault. He was still far too weak in artillery, in spite of loans from the Allies, and he saw no way of procuring the necessary strength. Moreover, the position which he had gained on the Bainsizza was not satisfactory as a jumping-off ground. The centre was too much in advance of the flanks. The Austrian position on the Lom and at Tolmino was a menace which must be removed before a new advance was practicable, and its re-

moval meant an operation for which he had not the strength. Above all, his losses had compelled him to fill up his units with new drafts which had not yet been tested. The flower of his armies had suffered in the long summer battles, and he dared not risk a new campaign until he was once more certain of his men.

Accordingly, at the end of September, he informed the Allies that his main operations were at an end. The Allies acquiesced, but it would appear that they did not realize the full meaning of Cadorna's decision. He understood, with a completeness not possible as yet to the French and British staffs, the disastrous possibilities involved in the defection of Russia. The Italian front, it was assumed by them, would relapse into the comparative quiet which had hitherto attended the close of Cadorna's offensives. Eleven of the sixteen British batteries were withdrawn, and the French guns, now on their way, were countermanded before they had been once in action.

During the summer months on the Eastern front, when the Russian line had ceased to be a serious obstacle, the Germans, contrary to the expectations of many, did not advance. They abode quietly in their old positions, waiting upon events. But they were not idle. Ludendorff saw clearly the chances involved in the downfall of Russia, and he set himself patiently to train his troops for a new kind of warfare. Picked divisions were practised in open fighting. A new tactical scheme was evolved which demanded a high perfection of discipline and individual stamina. The Allies in the West had relied

in their offensives on an elaborate artillery preparation, which, while it destroyed the enemy trenches, created a broad belt of devastation over which a swift advance was impossible. That was one error to be avoided. A second was the slowness with which the Allies brought up their divisions. In order to get the full cumulative effect of a blow, division must follow division to strike while the iron was hot. Again, the element of surprise must be recovered, and this might be got by a rapid assembly on the very eve of an assault, before the enemy's intelligence could discern the concentration. It was also necessary to have the machine guns, the light trench mortars, and the field guns in the very van of an attack to prepare the way for the infantry ; and since an elaborate bombardment was foregone, the enemy's hinterland must be confused by an extensive use of gas shells. These new tactics demanded the most meticulous training, and great power of initiative on the part of subordinate commanders. During the summer months the East formed one vast training camp, where patiently and methodically Ludendorff taught his new system of war. His aim was no less than to destroy by cataclysmic battles first the armies of Italy, and then those of France and Britain, before the American forces arrived, and while Russia was yet helpless in anarchy.

Brussilov's abortive Galician offensive in July made scarcely a break in the plan. By the beginning of September the new tactics were tried in the field in von Hutier's capture of Riga. Unfortunately for the Allies, there was no one present with Parski's defeated Twelfth Russian Army who could realize

the importance of the new methods. It was assumed in the West that the Russians were effete as a fighting force, and that anything possessed of discipline was competent to break them. Meantime, Ludendorff was making ready for the first great test of his plan. Some time in August Otto von Below was brought temporarily from the command of the Sixth German Army in the West, his place being taken by von Quaast, and given charge of a new composite army, the Fourteenth, composed of six German and seven Austrian divisions. In the German contingent was included the Bavarian *Alpenkorps*, which had already distinguished itself in Rumania. Half of the field artillery was replaced by mountain guns, and the whole army was equipped not only for the practice of the new tactics, but for a campaign in a hilly country. Rumours of something of the kind reached the West; but the German share was unknown, and it was assumed to be only the Austrian preparation for the long-rumoured offensive in the Trentino.

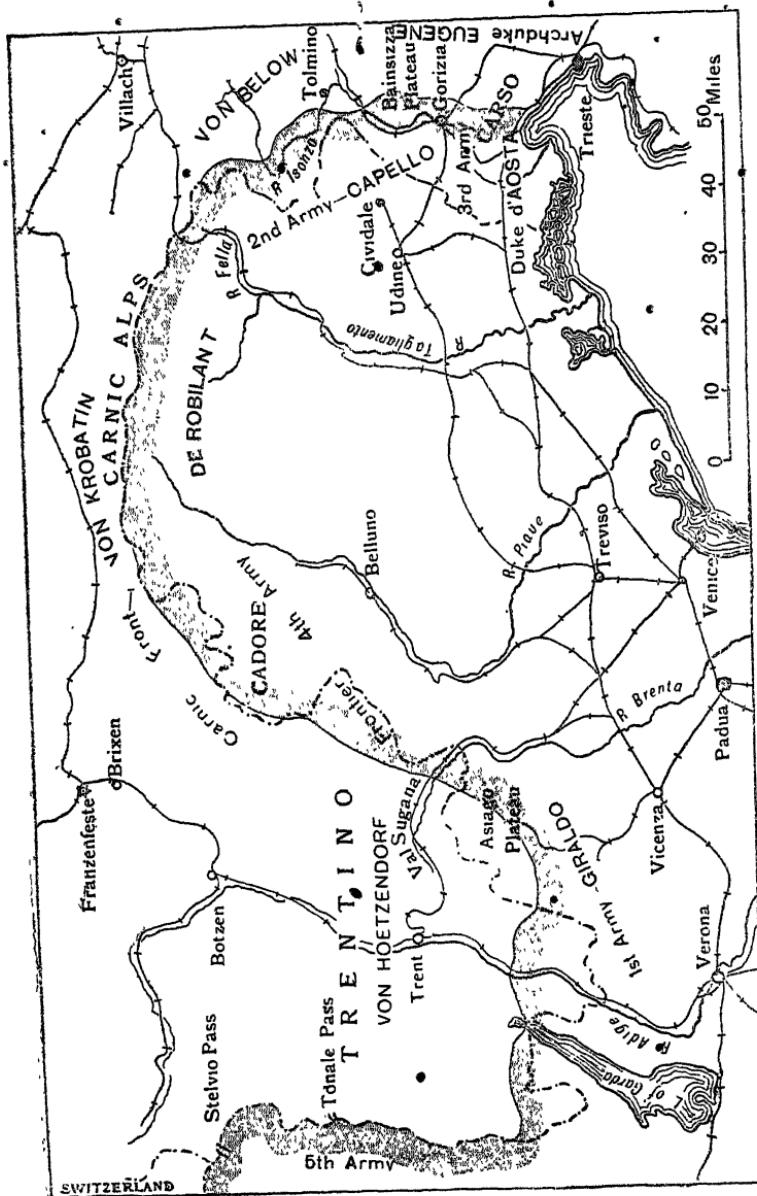
More important, the German General Staff took over the actual direction of the Italian front. The shadowy figures of the Archduke Eugene, the nominal commander-in-chief Conrad von Hoetzendorff, and army commanders like Boroevitch, Roth, and Dankl, still remained; but the new strategy was wholly in Ludendorff's hands. On Boroevitch's right, between Tolmino and Plezzo, Otto von Below's Fourteenth Army crept quietly into position. The Austrian General Staff had hitherto thought of an offensive as possible only from some base like Gorizia or the Trentino, where they had perfect road and rail communications behind them. Luden-

dorff, with the boldness of true military genius, resolved to surprise his opponents by attacking from one of the most apparently unpromising sections of the whole Julian front—that between Tolmino and Plezzo. There, he argued, he might catch Cadorna asleep. There, too, the Italian front was ill-sited, zigzagging as it did across the Isonzo, and stretching in a dangerous arc along the crest of Monte Nero. The three spots where the valley broadened—Plezzo, Caporetto, and Tolmino—were also spots where tributary valleys entered from the east, thus providing avenues for the assault. There, too, lay the chance for a decisive strategical gain. For across the river, beyond Monte Matajur and Monte Globocaac, the valleys of the Natisone and the Judrio ran direct to the Friulian plain far in rear of the Italian lines. If by a swift surprise von Below could reach Cividale and Udine, he might cut off the bulk of the Italian Second Army and the whole of the Third, and achieve a mightier Sedan.

The Central Powers left nothing to chance. For months they had been sowing tares in Italian fields. A secret campaign was conducted throughout Italy, which preached that peace might be had for the asking, and urged Italian Socialists to throw down their arms and fraternize with their brothers from beyond the mountains. If Austria attacked, it was said, it was only to enforce the views of the Vatican and establish the brotherhood of the proletariat; let her advance be met with white flags and open arms, and the reign of capitalism and militarism would be over. This appeal, insidiously directed both to the ignorant Catholic peasantry and to the extreme Socialists of the cities, worked havoc

with the Italian *moral*. Orlando, the Minister of the Interior, was averse from repressive measures, and enemy propaganda had for the moment almost as clear a field as in the Russia of the Revolution. The poison had infected certain parts of the army to an extent of which the military authorities were wholly ignorant. The events of August in Turin did not open their eyes. Turin had always been the centre of the wilder kind of Socialism. It was the one city of Italy which responded to the declaration of war in May 1915 with a general strike; and during the summer the roving delegates of the Russian Soviet had there been given an openly political welcome. As one of the chief munition centres its state of feeling had a direct influence on the conduct of the war. In August serious riots broke out, ostensibly on account of the scarcity of bread. There was reason to believe that this scarcity had been secretly organized, for even after it had been relieved the trouble continued. There was evidence of a widespread anarchist system, liberally financed with enemy money, and during the riots hobbledehoys were found dead in the streets with large sums in their pockets. There was something like mutiny, too, among the troops allotted to quell the disorder, and regiments had to be brought in from other districts. Turin, as a consequence, was placed within the war zone, in order that martial law might be enforced in case of trouble. The troops who had disgraced themselves were dispatched to the Julian front, and by a singular mischance were placed in the ominous sector between Plezzo and Tolmino.

At the beginning of October the Italian front



Sketch showing Italian Front, October 1917 (with distribution of the Italian Armies and Enemy Army Commands).

was quiet. The Fifth Army, under General Morrone, lay on the west side of the Trentino, and Pecori-Giraldo's First Army on the east side as far as the Brenta. De Robilant's Fourth Army held the Cadore and Carnic front ; Capello's Second Army, now very weary, held the Isonzo north of Gorizia ; and the Duke of Aosta's Third Army lay from Gorizia to the Adriatic. A sense of uneasiness was abroad, generated partly by the knowledge of the High Command that some kind of Austrian offensive was maturing, and partly by the expectation of the extremists and pacifists, nourished on enemy propaganda, that the hour was approaching when the proletariat would take the reins and Italian and Austrian soldiers would make peace in defiance of generals and cabinets. In the middle of October there was a small action in Cadore, in which for the first time the presence of German troops was established. Hitherto Germans and Italians had never met, except in Macedonia, and the news increased the popular anxiety. But Cadorna and Giardino, the Minister of War, assured the country that the Julian front was perfectly safe. By the 21st it was known that both German and Austrian reserves had arrived on the Isonzo ; but scepticism still prevailed as to a serious offensive. It was believed, even by the High Command, that Austria was morally and economically exhausted, and that Germany's slowness to advance in Russia was due to weakness and not to purpose. Nothing was suspected of Ludendorff's patient summer preparations.

The *malaise* of anxiety was reflected in Parliament, which met on 16th October. The Govern-

ment was strongly criticized both by the extreme Socialists and the patriotic Opposition, chiefly on the ground of domestic mismanagement. Boselli was too old, and had no policy; and when he was confronted with a difficulty, merely created a new minister—such was the burden of a complaint not unfamiliar also in Britain and France. Nitti, the Neapolitan professor, spoke on the 21st; and, while trenchant in his criticism, defended Orlando, and appealed eloquently for national unity. On the 23rd Orlando made a speech which established his parliamentary position, and made certain his succession to the premiership. While strongly for the war, his respect for Parliament and his devotion to the liberty of the individual made him acceptable to the Giolittians and the neutralists. Sonnino spoke on the 25th, and dealt vigorously with pacifism, and notably with the Vatican Peace Note. On the

*Oct. 26.* 26th the Boselli Government fell, with general consent. It had been too much of a party compromise and not enough of an efficient machine. Yet it did not so much fall as re-form itself, the chief figures remaining in different posts, since at such a crisis the country could not suffer any proved talent to be out of office. For on the 24th that had happened which had made the *Osservatore Romano* to lie down with the *Idea Nazionale*, and had called every true son of Italy to the defence of her crumbling frontiers.

The Italian lines on the Middle Isonzo dropped from the Bainsizza to the right bank north of Auzza, and continued on that shore to a point north of Tolmino. There they crossed, ran along the crest of Monte Nero, covering Caporetto, and recrossed

where the Isonzo bent sharply eastward south of Plezzo. Thence on the right bank they ran to the west of the high peak of Monte Rombon. The Caporetto section was a large bridgehead on the right bank of the river, which the Italians held to guard the approaches to the valley of the Natisone, which led to Cividale and Udine and the Friulian plain. For several days the enemy guns had been firing ranging shots, and on the night of the 23rd a heavy bombardment, principally with gas shells, had broken out on the twenty-five mile front between Monte Rombon and Auzza. Cadorna was now apprised of what was coming, and his morning *communiqué* of the 24th was a warning to his countrymen. "The enemy," it ran, "with the help of German troops and military units of all kinds, has completed a very heavy concentration against our front. The enemy offensive finds us firm and prepared." Capello, commanding the Second Army, at the moment lay sick of a fever.

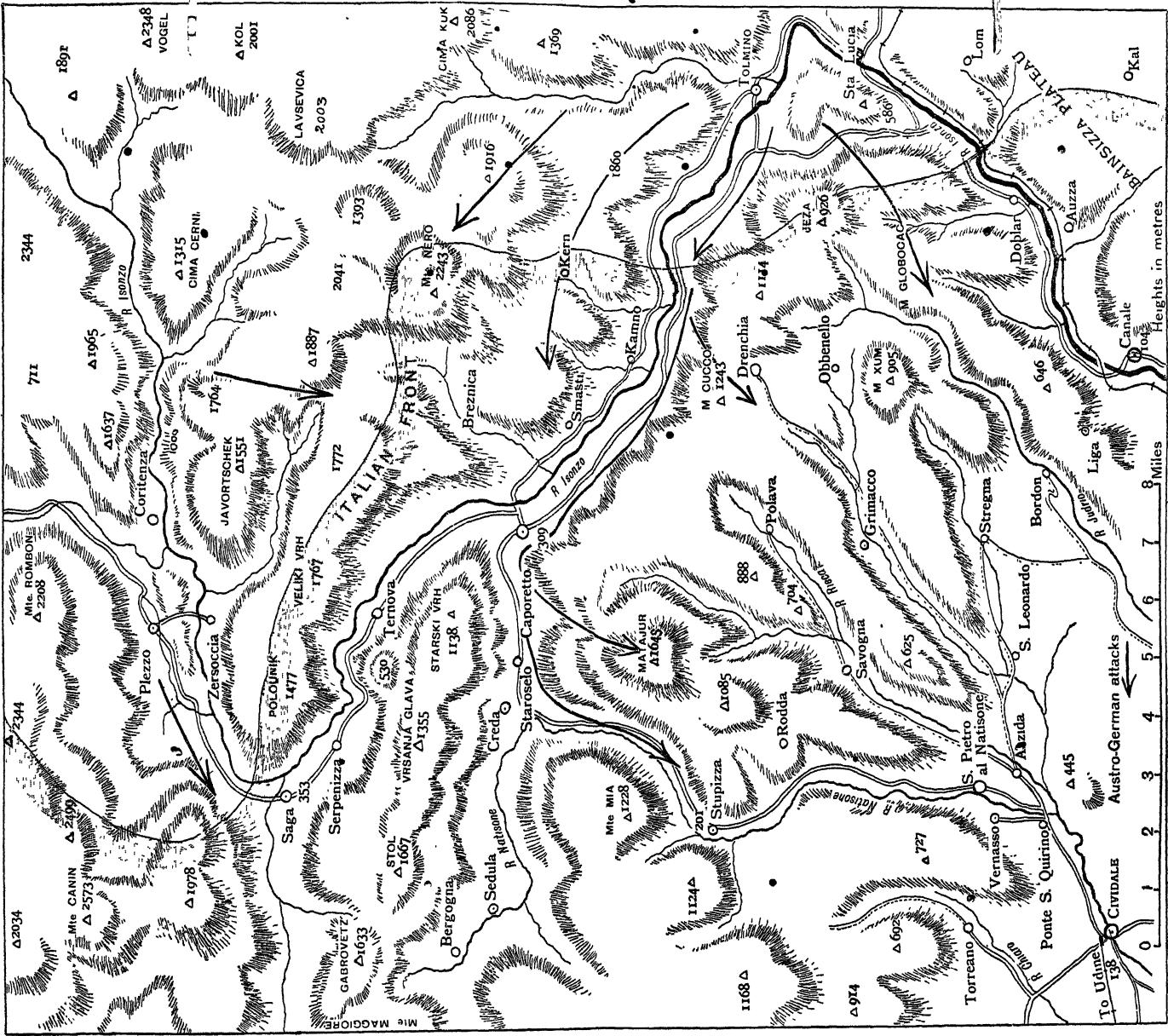
Dawn broke on the 24th in thick mist and driving rain, which on the higher hills changed to snow. For a little the guns ceased on both sides, and then in the early forenoon the *Oct. 24.* Austrian bombardment opened violently on the chosen sector. It was the weather which von Below desired, for it gave him the chance of surprise. The infantry were hurled against the whole front from Rombon to the south end of the Bainsizza. On the left and the right the line held, but in the centre, from Saga to Auzza, the first Italian position was carried, and in the afternoon the enemy was across the river attacking the reserve lines. It was now clear that there were three main threats—one from

Plezzo up the glen towards Monte Maggiore, at the mouth of which lies the village of Saga ; one from his bridgehead at Tolmino against Monte Globocac and the upper streams of the Judrio ; and one against the *massif* of Polounik and Monte Nero, aiming at Caporetto and Monte Matajur and the Starasella pass, leading to the valley of the Natisone. By the evening the enemy were on the slopes west of the Isonzo. The Austrian attack at Saga was gallantly held, and the progress westward from the Tolmino bridgehead was stubbornly resisted. But it was otherwise at Caporetto. The attack from Tolmino turned up the valley, and joined the pressure from the direction of Polounik. There von Below's German divisions were in action ; and there, too, were found treachery and folly in the Italian ranks. There were strange tales of men running out with white flags to greet their Teuton "comrades," and being shot down or made prisoners in hundreds. There were tales of troops in reserve who refused to advance.

All through the 25th the struggle went on,  
*Oct. 25-* and on the morning of the 26th the  
26. Italian line from Monte Maggiore to

Auzza was back on or behind the frontier crest. The Bainsizza plateau had been cleared ; it had taken twenty days of hard fighting to capture it, and in twelve hours it had gone. Cadorna had moved his headquarters from Udine to Padua. In the great *débâcle* there were many superb feats of heroism, such as that of the garrison of Monte Nero, who held out for several days and died to a man, and the troops on Monte Globocac, who defended successfully the gate of the Judrio till it had ceased





The Austro-German Advance across the Isonzo and the March on Cividale (Oct. 24-28, 1917).



to matter. But the two corps in the Caporetto section had melted away, and through the breach von Below was pouring his men over Monte Matajur. So complete had been the breakdown that that summit fell at 7 a.m. on the morning of the 25th, twenty-three hours after the attack began.

On the 27th the avalanche increased its speed. It was no question now of holding the frontier ridge; the only hope was the Tagliamento, the Piave, or it might be the Adige. Already over 60,000 prisoners had been lost, and some hundreds of guns. That day saw the end of the defence on the Maggiore-Matajur ridge. Next day, the 28th, Cadorna's grave *communiqué* brought home the truth to the Italian people. It was censored before publication, for, as he wrote it originally, he did not speak of "insufficient resistance" but of naked treason.

"The violence of the attack, and an insufficient resistance on the part of certain units of the Second Army, has permitted the Austro-German forces to break through our defence on the left wing of the Julian sector. The valiant behaviour of the other troops did not suffice to prevent the enemy from penetrating to the sacred soil of our fatherland. Our line retires according to plan. The depots and munition stores of the territory evacuated have all been destroyed. The splendid courage of our soldiers in so many famous battles fought and won during the two and a half years of war encourage the High Command to hope that on this occasion the Army, to which is entrusted the honour and the safety of Italy, will know how to do its duty."

It was such a crisis as the war had scarcely shown—a calamity sudden, unlooked for, and over-

whelming. On that day, the 28th, von Below debouched from the Natisone valley on the Friulian plain. The burning remains of Cividale were in his hands, and Udine was at his mercy. The Second Army, weary with the autumn offensive, weakened with discontent and treason, and shattered by the impact of the new tactics, had become a fugitive rabble. That day, and not an hour too soon, the Third Army on the Carso began its desperate task of retreat. That evening the Austrians re-entered Gorizia.

## CHAPTER CXLVI.

### ITALY'S STAND ON THE PIAVE.

Gravity of the Situation—Italy's Spirit—Enemy unprepared for Success—The Retreat to the Tagliamento—Nature of Tagliamento Line—Splendour of Italian Performance—The Work of the Marines—Importance of Venice—Retreat of Fourth Army from Carnia and Cadore—Retreat to the Livenza—The Piave reached—Allied Reinforcements reach Italy—The Conference at Rapallo and its Results—Diaz succeeds Cadorna—The Dangers of the Piave Front—The Italian and Austrian Dispositions—The Left Flank in the Hills—The Austrians fail to cross the Lower Piave—The Fighting on the Asiago Plateau—The Fighting east of the Brenta—Monte Grappa and Monte Tomba—Recapture of Monte Tomba—Position at Beginning of 1918—End of Caporetto Campaign—The Consequences of the Italian Retreat.

THE situation was the gravest that Italy had met since she entered the war—the gravest, save for the tremendous days of the Marne and the crisis of First Ypres, which the Allies had yet witnessed on the West. Capello's command had been broken in pieces, and was no longer an army. Streaming back in wild disorder to the Friulian plain, it uncovered the Duke of Aosta's flank, and seemed to imprison him between the invaders and the Adriatic. The suspicion that treachery had in some degree contributed to the disaster was like to make the retreat more difficult, for such news spreads like a fever among troops and saps their resolution.

The undoubted fact that the enemy was pursuing new tactics, as yet not understood and therefore unanswered, nullified the plans of the High Command. The huge salient had broken at the apex, and every mile of retirement on the east meant a complex withdrawal on the north. Upon forces wearied with a long campaign descended in a black accumulation every element of peril which had threatened Cadorna since Italy first drew the sword.

The spirit of the nation rose gallantly to the call of danger. The grim *communiqué* of the 28th brought down many a politician's castle of cards. On 27th October the king had arrived in Rome, and on 1st November the new Ministry was announced, with Orlando as Premier, Sonnino at the Foreign Office, the young Neapolitan Nitti at the Treasury, and Alfieri as Minister of War. More important than Cabinet changes was the unanimity of the people. All—almost all—sections of the nation and the Press faced the crisis with a splendid fortitude. Party quarrels were forgotten, there was little recrimination for past blunders, and the resolution of a united Italy was braced to meet the storm. Only the extreme Socialists, to whom the disaster was not unwelcome, stood aloof, and their organ, the *Avanti*, continued to preach the arid platitudes of the class war.

The strain was increased by ignorance as to what forces were sweeping down on the northern plain from the Isonzo hills. Rumour spoke of twenty, thirty, forty German divisions under von Mackensen marching through the gap, and the legend grew with every lip that uttered it. Even the High Command was in perplexity, and put the

enemy at a far higher figure than the facts warranted. But it was the new tactics, and not weight of numbers, that had broken the line. Otto von Below had but his six German divisions, and could not hope for reinforcements yet awhile. It was Italy's salvation that the enemy was as much surprised as herself. He had made an experiment which he hoped would return to Austria her old western boundaries ; it had in fact opened the way to Milan, but he was not prepared for such a miracle of fortune. Had he been ready to strike from the Trentino against the Italian First Army, and from Carnia against the Fourth, while von Below and Boroevitch pressed in the Second and Third, he might have annihilated the military power of Italy. Broken at the point of her salient, she could not in these terrible days have resisted even a moderate offensive on her northern flank, and the line of the Adige might have been turned before Cadorna's rearguards reached the Tagliamento. But Ludendorff had not made the plan for so wholesale a conquest ; that came later, but when it came the golden opportunity had gone.

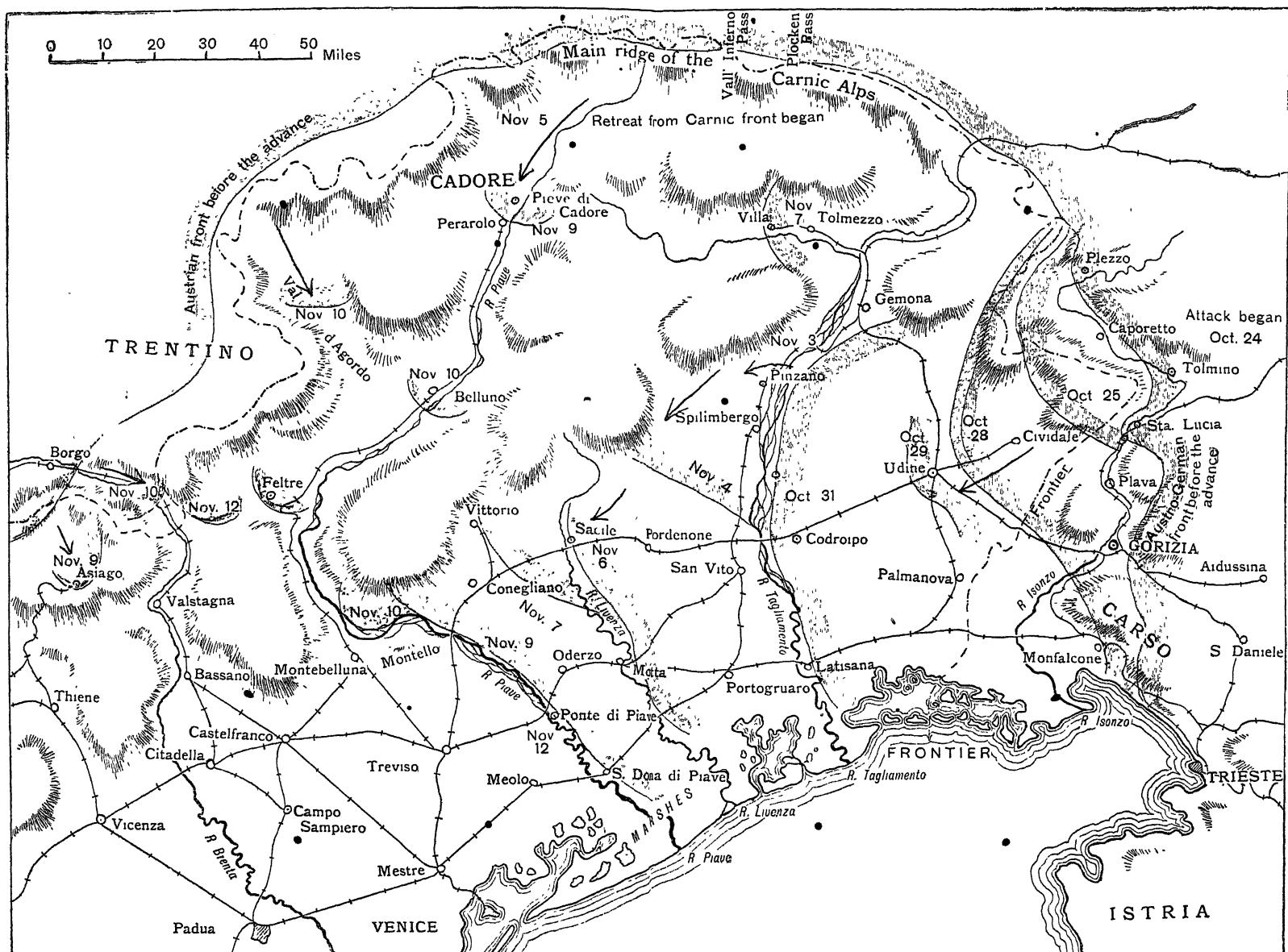
On Saturday, 27th October, von Below was in Cividale ; the Third Army, after a fine rearguard action in the Vallone, had retired from the Carso, and Boroevitch was in Gorizia. Next day von Below was on the edge of Udine, the little city with its cathedral-crowned height and its narrow, arcaded streets which mounts guard over the Friulian plain. The gravest problem was the position of the Third Army. When it began to fall back from the Carso, it was no nearer the Tagliamento than the spearhead of the

Oct. 27-  
28.

enemy, and the Tagliamento was the first halting-place for Cadorna's retreat. The Second Army had gone, and by Sunday the enemy had 100,000 prisoners from it, and 700 of its guns. For a moment it seemed certain that the Duke of Aosta would share the fate of Capello. A million of men were retreating along the western highways, encumbered with batteries and hospitals and transport, while by every choked route peasants and townsmen fled for refuge from the Austrian cavalry. Units lost discipline, orders miscarried, roads were blocked for hours, and all the while down from the north came the menace of von Below, swooping southward to cut off all retreat. There had been nothing like it before in the campaign, not even in the Russian *débâcle* of 1915, for then there had been great open spaces to move in. In the gut of Friulia, between the foot-hills and the sea, a mass of humanity was struggling westward, soldiers and civilians mingled inextricably. Under leaden skies and pouring rain they pressed feverishly on, for it was a race against time if they were not to find the Tagliamento held by the enemy. And from the country they were leaving, now lit up with the glow of bursting shells and blazing villages, came horrible tales, only too true, of rapine and outrage by the Austrian vanguards. If ever panic was to be forgiven it was on those nightmare miles where troops were set a task too high for human valour.

But to its eternal glory the Third Army did not fail. With heavy losses, and by the narrowest margin, it won the race. There were two roads of retreat, each attended by a railway—that from Udine to Pordenone, which crosses the Tagliamento by the long





**The Austro-German Advance into Italy.—Sketch Map showing the progress of the invaders from Caporetto to the Piave (Oct. 24-Nov. 12, 1917).**



## ITALY'S STAND ON THE PIAVE. 41

bridge of Codroipo first built by Napoleon, and that from Monfalcone to Portogruaro, with a bridge at Latisana. There were many byroads and lesser bridges, but these were the only highways for heavy traffic. For three days—from 28th October to 30th October—a curtain of darkness seemed to descend on the Italian stage.

There were no claims from the enemy, no clear news from Cadorna. On the 28th the Austrians were in Cormons; on the 29th the Germans were in Udine. On the 30th remnants of the Second Army were crossing the river at Codroipo, and a kind of defensive flank had been established facing north to cover the vital crossing of Latisana.

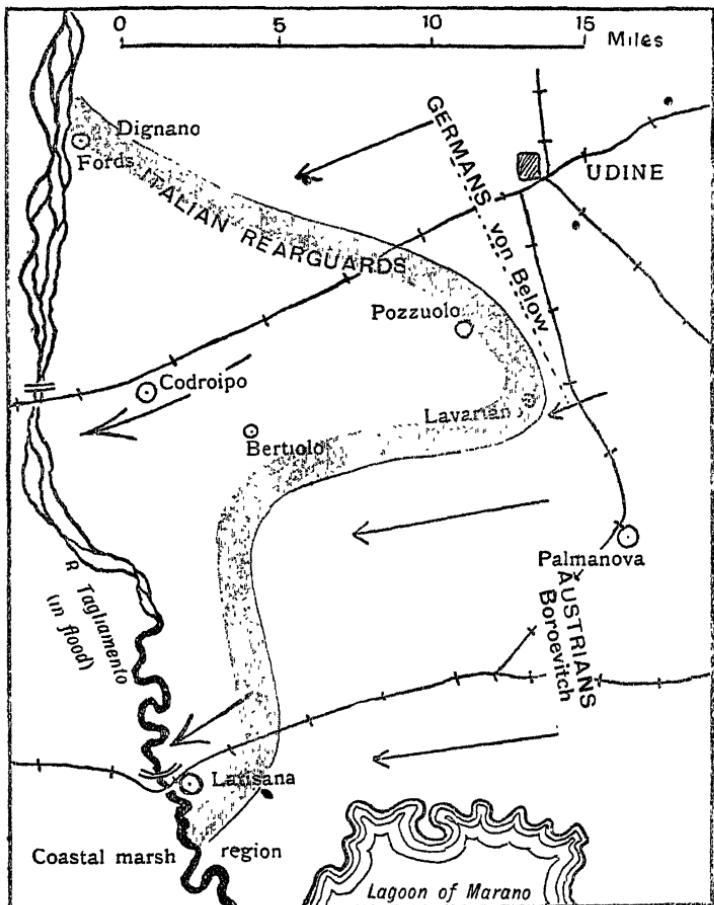
Next day the bulk of the Third Army crossed, sacrificing its rear divisions and 500 guns; and on the first day of November the Duke of Aosta was in position on the western bank, with the river roaring in flood between him and his pursuers.

For a moment there was a pause, while the enemy, who had outstripped his heavy batteries, waited on their arrival. The race had been won, but it was a shattered remnant of Cadorna's armies which drew breath after their week of torment. The enemy claimed 200,000 prisoners and 1,800 guns, and his claim was not far from the truth. He seemed on the eve of a decisive victory.

The Duke of Aosta's retreat was one of those performances in war which succeed against crazy odds, and which, consequently, we call inexplicable. It made an Italian stand possible, and deprived the enemy of the crowning triumph which he almost held in his hands. How desperate was the struggle may be judged from what we know of the retirement

*Oct. 28–  
30.*

*Oct. 31–  
Nov. 1.*



Action on Left Bank of the Tagliamento, October 31, 1917.

of the naval batteries on the coast flank. There were such batteries at Monfalcone, at Punta Sdobba, and at the point of Grado; and when, on the 28th, the Third Army's retirement began, there seemed noth-

ing to prevent the Austrian fleet from issuing from Pola and landing on the Venetian shore in rear of the retreat. For only light naval forces watched the coast, and the main Allied Navy was at Taranto, 600 miles away. The rain fell in sheets, and a wind from the sea drove up the tide so that the canals overflowed and flooded the marshes. After thirty-six hours of heavy toil the guns were got out of Monfalcone, but not before the rearguard of Italian marines was exchanging rifle shots with the Austrian van. The guns were dragged through the swamps, or placed on rafts and poled through the shallows amid the rising storm. Grado was reached and presently evacuated, and with the enemy pressing on their heels, the marines succeeded in making their way through the labyrinth of the coastal lagoons till they reached the Piave mouth, and became the pillar of the right wing of the new front.

The Tagliamento was clearly no line to abide on. In seasons of flood it was in places a mile wide, but for most of the year it was a tangle of shallow channels flowing among wastes of pebbles. The bed of the stream, silted up with gravel brought down from the hills, was a score of feet above the level of the surrounding country. At the moment it was in flood, but by 1st November the rain had stopped and the stream was falling, so it opposed but a slender obstacle to the enemy. Moreover, it could be easily turned on the north, and in the main railway through the Pontebba pass the Austrians had the means for such an operation to their hand. Cadorna could halt for a day or two to re-form, but he dare not linger.

If the Tagliamento were given up, there was no

good line till the Adige was reached, some sixty miles to the west. But to retire to the Adige would be to uncover Venice. The importance of that famous city was more than sentimental. It was the key to the Adriatic, the key to the whole of Italy's defence. With Venice in the enemy's hands, the Italian warships would have been compelled to fall back four or five hundred miles to a base at Brindisi: Austria would have controlled the Northern Adriatic, and her fleet could no longer be shut up in Pola and inside the Dalmatian islands. She would be able to send her submarines in large numbers out into the Mediterranean and dislocate the Allied naval commerce with the East. She would have a free hand to harry the coasts of Italy. With Venice gone, Italy's right flank was unprotected, for in truth her front did not stop short with the shore line. The Adige was therefore out of the question, and by hook or by crook a halting-place must be found which kept Venice inside her country's battle line. To this problem there could be only one answer. The stand must be on the Piave.

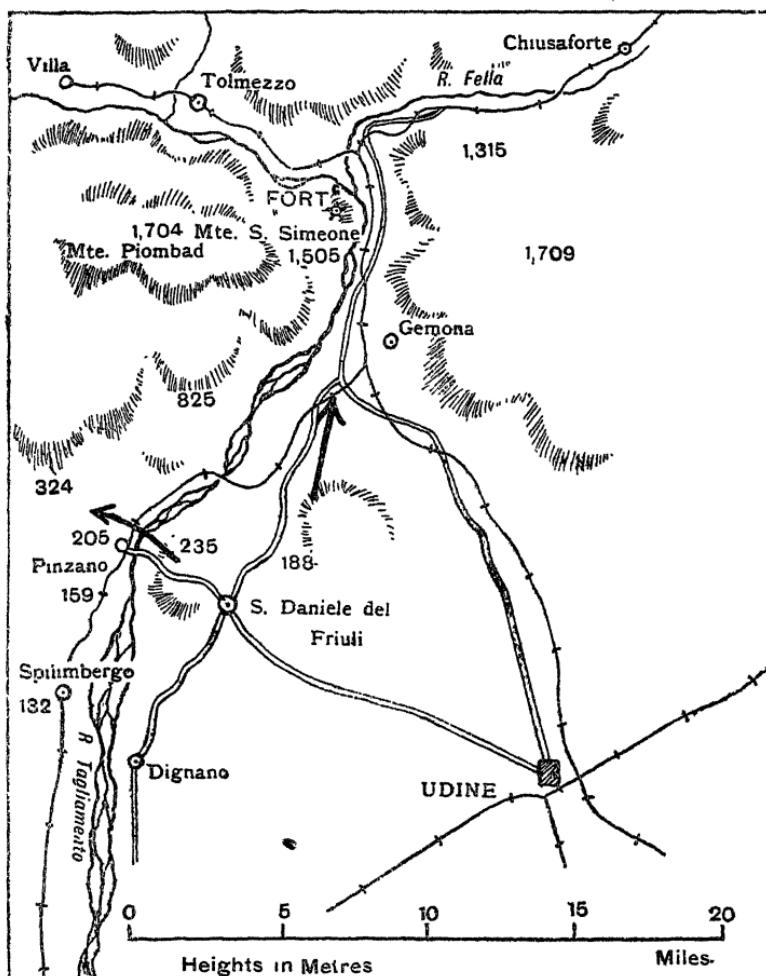
It was not a front which a general would select had he any choice. The river rises among the fantastic Dolomite peaks, and flows south in a narrow mountain vale till at Belluno it turns to the southwest and emerges from the hills. In the forty miles of its mountain course it is no serious obstacle to any enemy. At Belluno it has become a considerable stream, and, after a wide bend through the leaf-shaped hollow towards Feltre, the foothills close in on it at the pass of Quero. It has now something of the character of the Tagliamento, a broad bed where many branches strain through gravel, between

embankments to keep the floods from the lower levels of the surrounding country. It then bends to the south-east, past the bridge of Vidor, where Napoleon and Massena crossed in 1797, and flows through the gap between the Asolo hills and the wooded Montello. From Nervesa for the remaining twenty-five miles to the sea it is a better defence—short, straight, and protected by the Montello on one flank, and the sea marshes on the other. The Piave was a strong line only towards its mouth, a weak and difficult line in the centre, and no line at all in its upper glens. Carnia and Cadore must be relinquished, and the Fourth Army brought back from those peaks and gorges, which it had won with such boldness and resolution through two arduous years, to hold a front from the Montello by the *massif* of Monte Grappa and across the Val Sugana to link up with the First Army in its old position on the Asiago plateau. While, therefore, the Duke of Aosta was struggling westward from the Tagliamento, de Robilant had fallen back from Cadore, and was moving with all haste towards the Middle Piave.

On Saturday, 3rd November, a German and a Hungarian division from von Below's army forced the passage of the Tagliamento at Pinzano, where the river leaves the foot-hills, thereby cutting off the Italian troops and guns on the line between Tolmezzo and Gemona. Caudorna still held on to the middle and lower river, and on the 4th repulsed an enemy attempt to cross near San Vito. But von Below's vanguards were already moving west along the edge of the hills, and on Tuesday, the 7th, the Taglia-

Nov. 3.

Nov. 4.

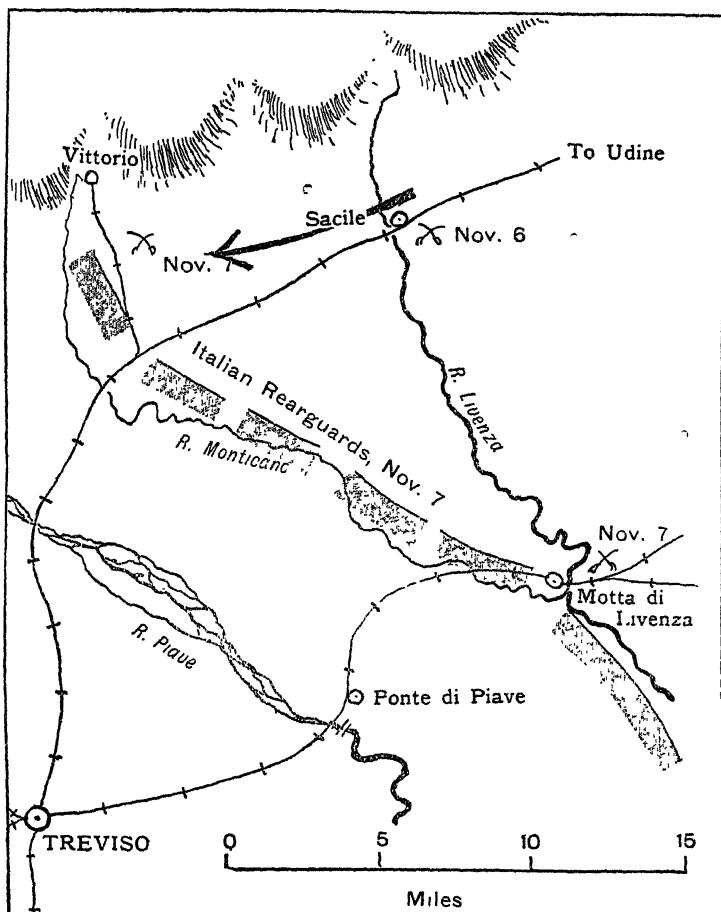


Forcing of the Tagliamento Line.

mento line was abandoned. The next stage was Nov. 7. the Livenza, a small stream running in a single channel, which carried little water save in flood-time. The pursuit was close and per-

sistent, and already on the 6th the enemy cavalry were in action at Sacile, where the Treviso-Udine railway crosses the Upper Livenza. The Italian line was now bent back heavily on its left, and, while the main force was still on the Livenza, the left wing was back on the Upper Monticano, which enters the Livenza at Motta. The Motta crossing was held long enough to get the guns of Nov. 8— the centre away, and on the 8th the 10. Livenza was abandoned. On the 10th Cadorna was everywhere back on the Piave, and the retreat had ended.

It had been conducted wholly by Italian troops, and the credit was Italy's alone. But the first news of the break at Caporetto had brought her Allies to her aid. Before the end of October French divisions were crossing the frontier, and a French force, the 12th Corps, under General Fayolle, was preparing to take its place on the Italian front. A British contingent, the 14th Corps, under Sir Herbert Plumer, the commander of the Second Army, had come into being by 10th November. In the first days of November Mr. Lloyd George left London for Italy, with General Smuts, Sir William Robertson, and Sir Henry Wilson. They were joined in Paris by the Premier, M. Painlevé, and General Foch; and on Monday, 5th Nov. 5. November, at the village of Rapallo, sixteen miles from Genoa, they met Orlando, Sonnino, and Alfieri. That conference was one of the most fruitful of the war. Out of it sprang the Allied Council at Versailles, which we shall consider later, and, indeed, the whole movement for a unified Western command. It settled the assist-



Forcing of the Livenza Line.

ance which France and Britain were to give to their hard-pressed neighbour, and it resulted in vital changes in the Italian High Command. Cadorna was transferred to Versailles, and his place as Commander-

in-Chief taken by the Neapolitan General Diaz, who had led with brilliant success the 23rd Corps in the Carso battles. General Badoglio became his Chief of the General Staff.

But though the certainty of Allied reinforcements simplified the problem and eased the mind of Italy as to her reserves, they could not come into line at once, and the defence of the Piave for some weeks must be maintained by her alone. It was still uncertain whether the line was a possible one, and it was at first arranged that the British and French should take up ground on the hills north and south of Vicenza, in case it should be necessary to retire behind the Brenta. That the plan of any such retirement was presently given up was mainly due to the sound strategical wisdom and resolution of General Plumer.

The critical part of the Piave was the Montello height, which was, so to speak, a hinge between the northern front facing the hills and the river front covering Venice. If the Montello went, the bridge which carried the Treviso-Udine railway would go, and so would the crossing at the Vidor gap to the north. But the crucial point on the whole front was the mass of Monte Grappa between the Piave and the Brenta. If it were carried, the enemy could debouch from the Brenta valley and turn the flank of the Piave defence. It was the threat from the north which occupied the mind of the new Commander-in-Chief, for the most gallant stand on the river line would be futile if the enemy broke down from the northern hills to the low country around Bassano. He had already begun to move in this direction. On the 9th, when the last

of the Duke of Aosta's rearguards were fording the Piave, and when de Robilant's Fourth Army was hastening through Belluno, pressure began in the Val Sugana and on the Asiago plateau, and the remains of the village of Asiago fell once again into Austrian hands.

On the 11th de Robilant was in position from the Montello to the Brenta, and the Austrians, pushing down the Upper Piave past Feltre,

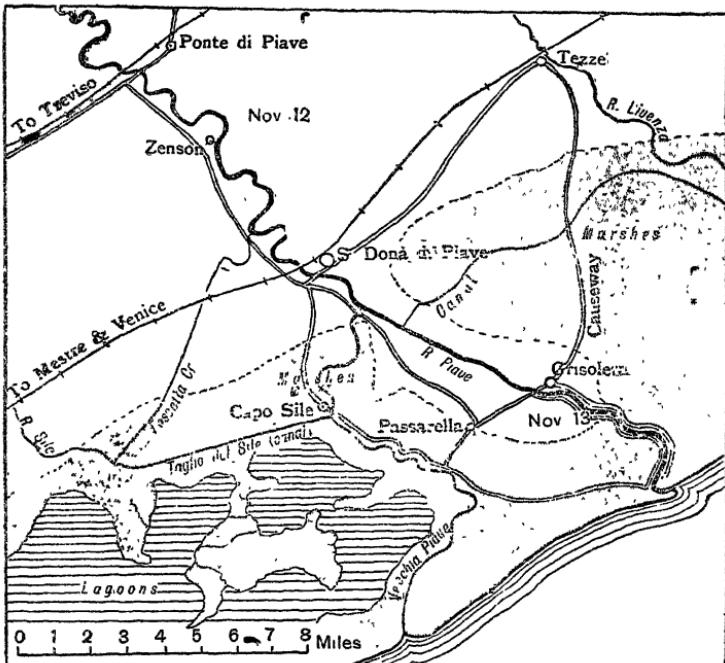
Nov. 11. had linked hands with their troops in the Val Sugana. The rain had begun again, and the soldiers on the Piave looking northward saw the high hills white with snow. It was a spectacle to cheer the soul of the High Command, for it lessened the risk of that break out from the mountains which was their worst peril. The forces were now set for the culminating struggle—Pecori-Giraldo's First Army facing Scheuchenstuel's Eleventh Austrian Army on the Asiago plateau, de Robilant's Fourth Army facing Krobatin's Tenth Austrian Army and part of von Below's Fourteenth Army from the Brenta to the Montello, the Duke of Aosta from the Montello to the sea opposed by von Below and Boroevitch. Clearly de Robilant had far too long a front for a single army, and to hold it boys of seventeen and eighteen were brought up from the depots and the garrisons, often after only a month's training. How valiantly they acquitted themselves this record will show. In the moment of their country's agony they flung themselves into the most desperate breach, and d'Annunzio's burning words have made their prowess immortal. Such were the dispositions during November. It was not till 4th December that Plumer and

Fayolle took over the Montello sector facing von Below, and so allowed de Robilant to concentrate on the Grappa area.

The points of danger, as we have said, were the northern flank, between Asiago and the Piave, and the gate of the Montello ; but from some cause or other the enemy did not concentrate all his efforts there. The lure of Venice made him strike also direct against the Lower Piave, where the Italian defences were by nature the strongest. One reason for this may be found in the character of his communications. In the plains they were excellent, but in the hills he had but the one railway down the Upper Adige valley, and the roads he had built for the 1916 attack were now deep in snow. Nevertheless, the attempt offered superb strategic prospects. The wall of the Alps above the plain of Bassano is cut clean as with a knife. It runs in a scarp at an average height of some 5,000 feet, broken only by the trough of the Brenta. Behind it rises a second tier, which, west of the Brenta, forms the rim of the Asiago plateau. To understand the position it is necessary to keep this formation in mind. The Italian front occupied the edge of the second tier east and west of the Brenta, with the Grappa *massif* and Monte Tomba well inside their lines. If the enemy could force his way to the edge of the first tier, he commanded the plains and had turned the Piave.

On the night of Sunday, the 11th, the Austrians attacked Monte Longaro, north-east of Asiago, but were held by the Alpini. Next day, Nov. 11—after a heavy barrage, Boroevitch's forces succeeded in crossing the Piave at the Zenson bend, eighteen miles from the sea—the first

bridgehead on the western bank secured by the enemy. On the 13th Longaro had fallen, Nov. 13. and the fighting was at Monte Sisemol, a peak east of Asiago, on the very edge of the second tier. That day, too, no less than four attempts were



Attempts to cross the Piave in the Coast Region.

made to cross the Lower Piave, at Quero, Fenere, St. Dona, and Intestadura, while Hungarian battalions crossed the canalized stream at Grisolera, and made their way through the marshes to the old channel, the Vecchia Piave. On Wednesday, Nov. 14. day, the 14th, the Italian left was firm on the edge of the second tier, across the peak

of Castelgomberto to Cismon, in the Brenta valley, but east it was forced by the loss of Monte Tomatico to descend to the first tier just above the Piave. Next day the pressure in the hills became stronger, and Cismon was lost.

On Friday, the 16th, Boroevitch made a vigorous attempt to cross the Piave. He tried at two points, Folina and Fogare, north of where the Treviso line crosses the river at the Ponte di Piave, failing conspicuously at the first, but winning a bridgehead at the second. That same day he had a success in the hills, carrying Monte Pras-solan, east of the Brenta. He had greatly strengthened his troops in this area, and on Sunday, the 18th, had won Quero, on the Piave, and forced part of the Italian front off the second tier of upland on to the first. They were now on Monte Tomba, on the very edge of the plains. The position was that on the Lower Piave the enemy held two bridgeheads, but had not elbow-room to develop them; while in the hills he was held on the second tier west of the Brenta, but had fought his way to the front tier at one point between that stream and the Piave. For the moment this little section of twelve miles was the critical part of the battle.

The rest of November saw a desperate struggle from Asiago to the Piave, especially in the Monte Grappa quarter. Elsewhere little happened, for the natural difficulty of the Lower Piave line, the stout resistance of the Italian marines in the marshes, and the constant shelling from monitors off the coast, made a crossing in force a forlorn enterprise for the enemy. But it was otherwise in the mountains, where, in spite of the snow, he made a resolute

effort to reach the last rim of upland which would give him a decisive success. The struggle was carried on mainly by Austrian mountain troops and Hungarian divisions, and von Below's Germans played small part in it. Blow after blow was delivered, alternately east and west of the Brenta, blows which were gallantly parried, though the weary Italian lines had slowly to give ground. In the first week of December it was clear that a great effort was maturing on the Asiago plateau, where, against a front of less than twelve miles, some 2,000 guns of all calibres were concentrated.

The attack was launched, after a furious bombardment, on 6th December, two Austrian forces

*Dec. 6.* moving from the north-west and the

*Dec. 6.* north-east against the salient at Asiago, which had its apex at Castelgomberto. It succeeded in driving Pecori-Giraldo altogether off the second tier of hills back to the first tier; but he still held Valstagna in the Brenta valley, and all but the top of the little Val Frenzela, which descends to it from the west. The enemy claimed 15,000 prisoners, for gallant companies of Alpini had held out on the lost peaks of Castelgomberto and Sisemol long after the line had retired. A week later, after a still greater massing of artillery, Krobatin attacked between the Brenta and the Piave. His aim was to win the debouchment of the Brenta valley by carrying the hills on the eastern side, and especially the passes of Caprile and Barretta, and the peak called Asolone,

*Dec. 11-* south of the latter. He struck on the

11th, and for four days the battle lasted;

*15.* but by Saturday, the 15th, he had achieved little beyond reaching the summit of the Caprile

pass. This did, indeed, give him a certain advantage by facilitating his movement of troops in the Brenta valley. On the 18th he succeeded in securing most of Monte Asolone, and farther east he held the lower of the two summits of Monte Tomba. This gave him positions outflanking Monte Grappa, and the possession of Asolone further endangered Valstagna on the Brenta. He was endeavouring to advance down the Val Sugana by taking forward steps alternately on each side of it.

On 22nd December the Italians counter-attacked at Monte Asolone, and recovered all its south slopes. On the 23rd they had to face another dangerous thrust south of Asiago to the left of the Frenzela glen, where the enemy took Monte di Val Bella, the Col del Rosso, and Monte Melago, which brought him nearer to the rim of the heights. A counter-attack recovered the last point, but on Christmas Day the position was still anxious. On both sides of the Brenta the enemy was getting terribly near the plains. Before the close of the year, however, an event happened which eased the situation. The French left had been moved west of the Piave to assist de Robilant in the Grappa region, and on 30th December, supported by British batteries, it attacked the eastern shoulder of Monte Tomba, and won it, together with 1,392 prisoners.

With the New Year the prospect steadily brightened. The wild weather in the hills handicapped the enemy effort, and gradually the German divisions were removed, since, in the view of Ludendorff, a decision could no longer be hoped for, and

he had need of them elsewhere. The long front of the Piave was quiet, with a swollen stream running fourteen knots before it. In the British section there were many adventurous raids, and in the first days of January the Duke of Aosta cleared the

*Jan. 14, 1918.* Austrians from the bridgehead at Zen-  
son. On 14th January de Robilant made

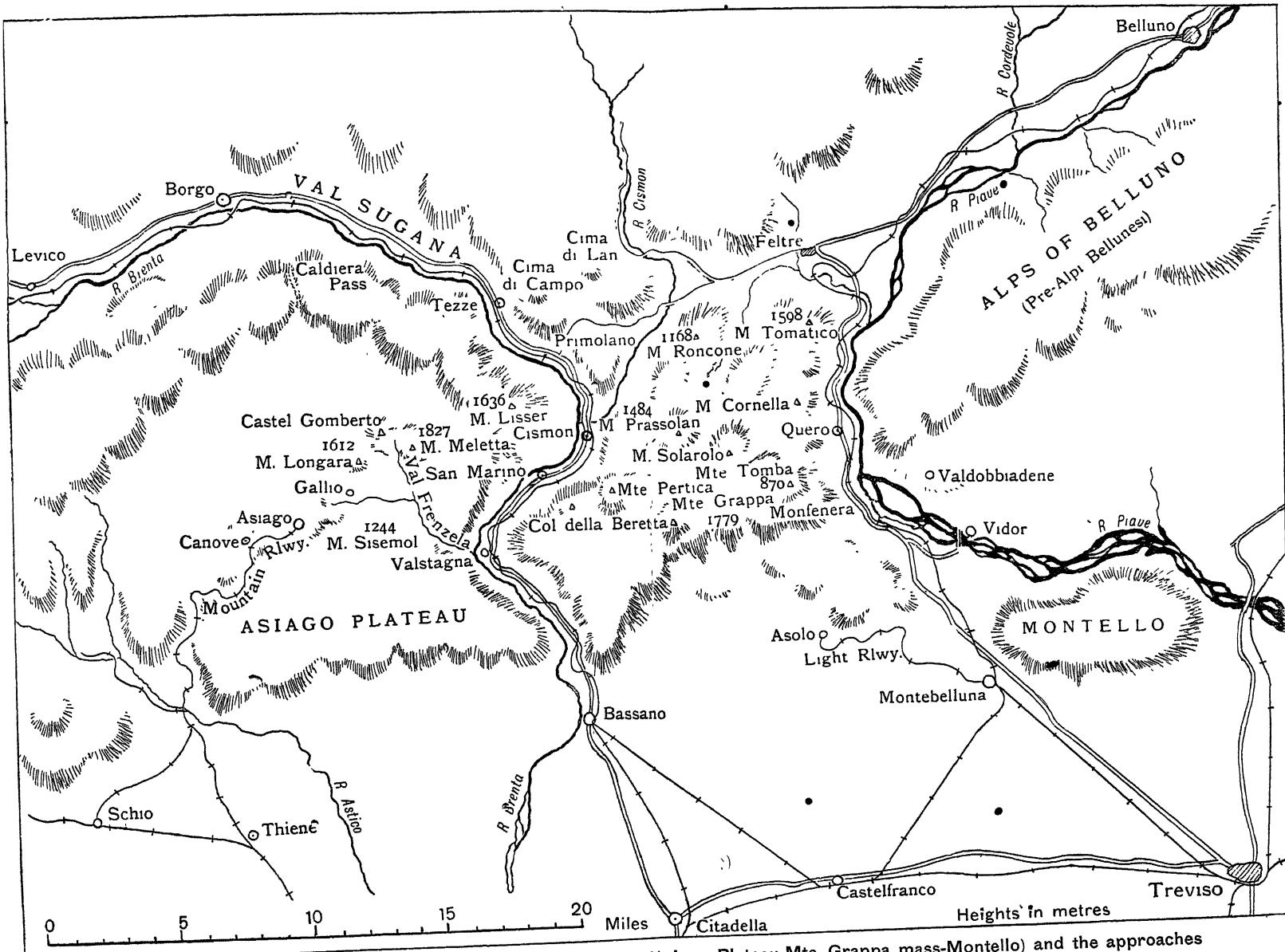
a successful attack on Monte Asolone, and before the end of the month Plumer had ex-  
tended his right so as to ease the Third Army in

*Jan. 28.* its task. On 28th January Pecori-Giraldo  
attacked the Col del Rosso and Monte  
di Val Bella, and took 2,500 prisoners.

With this episode the campaign which began at Caporetto may be said to have reached its close. It had taken heavy toll of Italy's strength, but it had failed to show that decisive victory which for some weeks had seemed inevitable. The German High Command had turned its mind from Austria and her troubles to a far greater plan in a more vital field, and Conrad von Hoetzendorff and the Archduke Eugene were left once more to their own devices.

The retreat to the Piave had various direct and calculable results. It shook to its foundations Italy's military strength, and deprived her of great stocks of war material which could be only slowly replaced. It gave famished Austria certain im-  
mediate supplies from the conquered lands, and fanned once again into a modest flame her flickering belligerent zeal. It proved to the German High Command the merit of their new tactics, and en-  
couraged them to try them in a greater venture. All these were solid assets for the Central Powers. Yet in a real sense the disaster brought more gain





Map showing the flank defence of the Piave line in the hills (Asiago Plateau-Mte. Grappa mass-Montello) and the approaches to the Venetian plain from the Val Sugana and the Belluno-Feltre hollow.



than loss to the Allies. It welded Italy into a closer union, and roused that ancient and untameable spirit which was one of her legacies from Rome. It forced on reforms in her commands, and it compelled her Government to give its attention to the "civil front," which had been weakened from neglect and treason. The splendid work of the American Red Cross, which began after Caporetto, was a practical proof of Allied goodwill, and did much to ease the lot of the soldiers' families; while the spectacle of French and British divisions on the Piave brought home for the first time to many Italians the magnitude of the alliance in which they were joined. More, her sudden success laid bare the true heart of Germany, and compelled all but the grossest self-deceivers among the Allies to realize the hollowness of the alleged German conversion to democracy, discredited what was left of von Kuhlmann's "peace atmosphere," and forced a recognition of the fundamental conflict of creeds

the antagonists—a recognition which the events of the next six months were to put beyond the sphere of doubt. Most of all, Caporetto and

sequel brought to an end the old isolation of

Western Ally. The problem, both military and economic, was now seen to be single and invisible; and, though months were to elapse before machinery was perfected and a yet bitterer lesson the fruits of disunion was to be learned, it is from

Conference of Rapallo that we can date the true  
of heart. Thenceforward, in theory at any  
there was but one front between the North  
and the Adriatic, a single exchequer and a  
granary.

## CHAPTER CXLVII.

### THE SITUATION ON THE TIGRIS, AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Position in Mesopotamia at End of April 1917—Effect of Russia's Breakdown—Falkenhayn at Aleppo—Minor Incidents of the Summer—The Capture of Ramadi—Capture of Tekrit—Death of Sir Stanley Maude—His Career—The Problem in Palestine—Sir E. Allenby's Plan—The Turkish Line from Gaza to Beersheba—Water and Transport—Capture of Beersheba—Feint at Gaza—Turkish Left Wing rolled up—Fall of Gaza—Enemy's Retreat—Allenby occupies Ascalon—Capture of Junction Station—The Fight for the Northern Road—Halt in British Advance and Turkish Counter-stroke—The Final Attack of 7th December—Fall of Jerusalem—Sir E. Allenby enters Jerusalem.

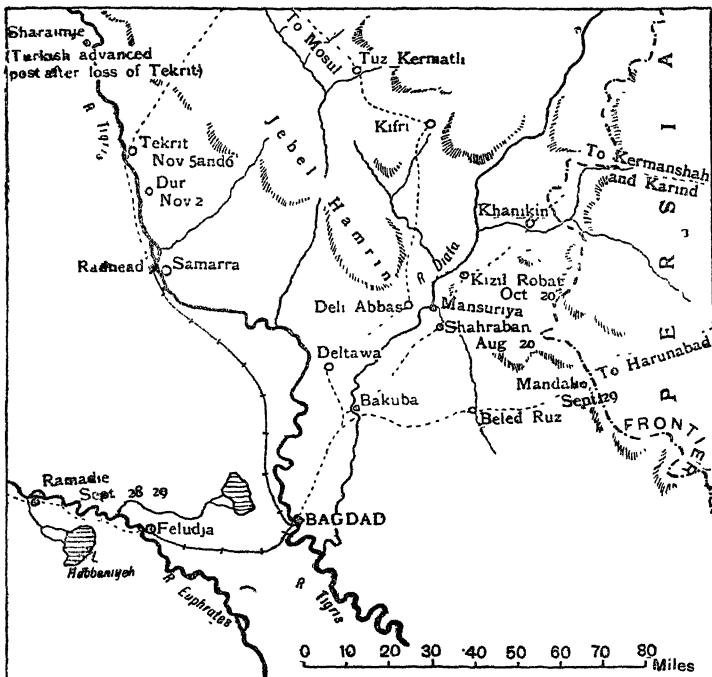
AT the close of April 1917 the Turkish 13th and 18th Corps had been driven back on divergent lines, the position at Bagdad was secure, and the growing heats of a Mesopotamian summer brought campaigning for the time being to an end. Leaving sufficient troops to guard the positions won Sir Stanley Maude withdrew the bulk of his force into reserve, distributing them in camps along the Tigris banks, where they might have the benefit of the occasional river breezes. The health of the army was excellent; supplies and transport had been brought to a high pitch of perfection; it was possible to arrange for extensive leave to India; an

the four months' inaction was employed in resting and reorganizing the men who had fought the Bagdad campaign and in making plans for the autumn.

As the weeks passed it became probable that the advent of the cooler weather might bring with it a serious enemy offensive. The demoralization of Russia was affecting the whole Eastern front. Much of it was already fluid, and Russia's weakness in Transcaucasia meant the opening of the gate for Turk and German into Central Asia, and the fanning of the flames of disorder through the length and breadth of Persia. Moreover, it appeared that Germany was not minded to let Mesopotamia slip from the control of the Central Powers. Falkenhayn was at Aleppo with new Turkish and German contingents. It was reported that he felt secure enough in Syria, and would use his strength in the autumn for the recovery of Bagdad. The brilliance of his recent successes did not conceal from Sir Stanley Maude the fact that his strategical position was not an easy one. He was nearly seven hundred miles up the Tigris from the sea. On his right flank he had the uncertain factor of Persia ; in front an entrenched enemy drawing reinforcements from Mosul by the Tigris valley ; and on his left the Euphrates valley, with its caravan route to Aleppo. Happily, the jealous desert circumscribed the area of conflict, and therefore the area of surprise. But, in view of the unplumbed possibilities of disaster inherent in the Russian situation, it behoved the British commander to set his house most warily in order.

The summer was not without its minor incidents. Early in June Baratov found that his Rus-

sian contingent on the Diala could not endure the heat of that sandy triangle, and fell back over the passes beyond Karind towards Kermanshah. This event forced Sir Stanley Maude to reoccupy Béled Ruz on the canal which enters the Diala at Man-



Operations in Mesopotamia in the Summer and Autumn of 1917.

suriya. More important was the position on the Euphrates, where, after our occupation of Feluja on 19th March, the Turkish garrison had retired twenty-five miles upstream to Ramadie. The town lies on the right shore of the river, and the

Turkish commander, Ahmed Bey, occupied an entrenched position covering it on the east and south-east with a force of something over 1,000 Turkish bayonets and 2,000 Arab tribesmen. Our position at Feluja was not a happy one, for the advance to Samarra on the Tigris meant that our centre had been pushed forward far in advance of our flanks. It was accordingly decided to bring up our left wing; and with this object, on 8th July, we occupied the high ground known as *July 8.* Sinn el Zibban, on the left bank of the Euphrates, some twelve miles beyond Feluja, where the Saklawie Canal, coming from the Akkar Kuf Lake at Bagdad, enters the river.

There, on the 10th, the column assembled for the attack on Ramadie. The Turks were unprepared, and they left unoccupied the high ground of Mushaid, four miles east of *July 10.* Ramadie, which was the true key of its defence. By 4 a.m. on the 11th our column was *July 11.* in touch with the enemy, and by 8.15 that morning had driven in his advanced posts. But the main attack could not be delivered. A blinding dust storm sprang up, observation became impossible, and that night the British withdrew to Mushaid, where there was a little shelter. Next day it was clear that an abnormal heat wave was beginning, and the column waited only long *July 12.* enough to make certain that Ahmed Bey did not meditate a retreat before falling back to Sinn el Zibban on the 14th. • A mob of Arab tribesmen who ventured to follow were severely cut up by our light-armoured motor batteries.

In August there was another small operation.

Our line had been drawn in on the Diala, and the retreat of Baratov had emboldened the enemy. He was pressing south-west of Shahraban, which we no longer held, and it became necessary to check him by reoccupying the place. On the night of the

*Aug. 18.* 18th a column moved from Bakuba up the great Persian road, and another from Beled Ruz along the canal. On the 20th Shahraban was taken with little opposition, the enemy retiring to his old fastness of the Jebel Hamrin.

With September came cooler weather, and plans were matured for the attack on Ramadie. Ahmed Bey had now been considerably reinforced, and he no longer neglected the Mushaid ridge, which runs north and south on the right bank of the Euphrates some sixty feet above the plain. It was a strong position, for its right was protected by the Habbaniyeh Lake, a large, brackish pan which British engineers, working there in 1914, had designed as a storage reservoir for the flood water of the river. Three miles behind the Mushaid heights lay the Turkish main position, running in a semicircle around Ramadie, first along the eastern bank of the canal between the Euphrates and the Habbaniyeh Lake, and then along some sandy downs to the Aziziyyeh Canal, which leaves the river a mile west of Ramadie. Sir Stanley Maude's plan was to turn the southern end of the Mushaid ridge, cross the Habbaniyeh Canal, and make his principal assault upon Ramadie from the south, while his cavalry, moving west of the Aziziyyeh Canal, flung themselves across the Aleppo road, and blocked the Turkish communications with Hit. He so distributed his troops as to suggest that his main attack would be

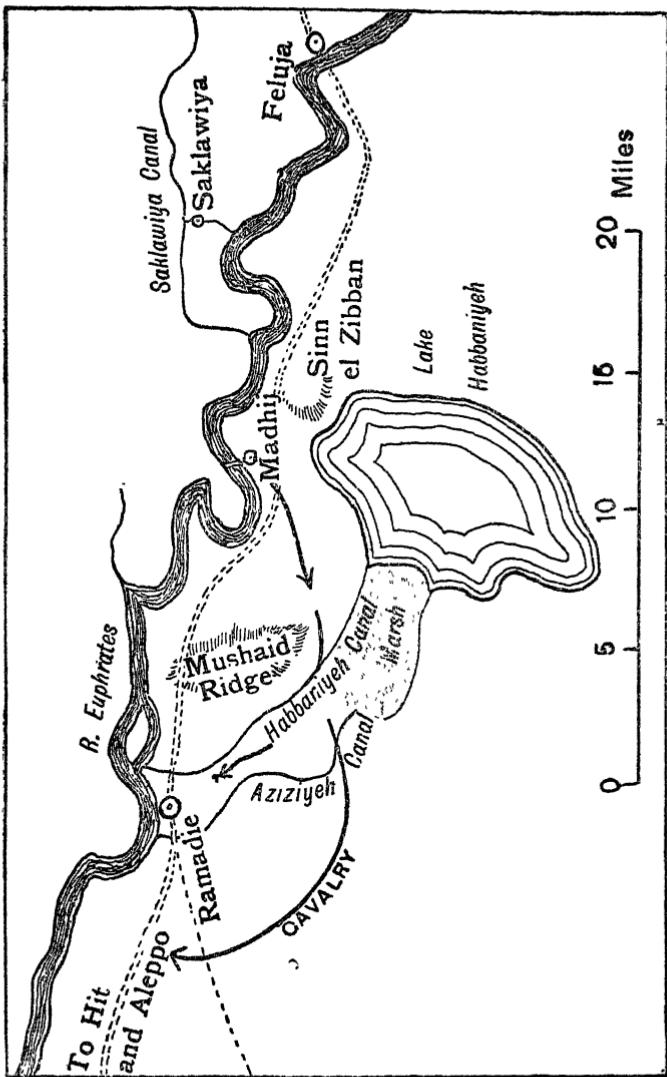
## THE SITUATION ON THE TIGRIS. 63

upon the enemy's left on the Euphrates, and for this purpose he had the river bridged at Madhij and a road made up the left bank.

The British starting-point was Madhij, some eight miles from the Turkish outposts. At six o'clock on the evening of 27th September two infantry columns and a cavalry force moved out for five miles, and the infantry during the night advanced a farther two miles, while a detachment skirted the northern shore of the Habbaniyah Lake, and succeeded in turning the southern flank of the Mushaid ridge. At dawn the enemy, seeing what had happened, evacuated Mushaid, which he shelled heavily in the belief that the British had occupied it. Maude, however, was moving south of the ridge, and at 7 a.m. dispatched the cavalry in a wide sweeping movement to the south and west. They crossed the Habbaniyah Canal, kept well south of Ramadie, crossed the Aziziayah Canal, and were presently to the west of the town astride the Aleppo road.

Sept. 27.  
Sept. 28.

The British were now in position, and their left attacked the Turkish southern front, which held a low pebbly ridge some seventeen feet above the plain. The enemy was driven off the ridge after hard fighting, in which the Dorsets and the 5th Gurkhas especially distinguished themselves. At the same time the right column, which had been passed in rear of the left column, was securing ground on the Aziziayah ridge, south-west of the town. The position at nightfall was that the enemy was hemmed in on all sides except on the north, where ran the Euphrates ; but over the Euphrates he had no bridge. His only chance was to break through



The Capture of Ramadi.

## THE SITUATION ON THE TIGRIS. 65

by a counter-attack before the net was drawn tight.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 29th Ahmed Bey made his effort to escape. He tried the cavalry screen on the west. The fight lasted till dawn, but the Turks *Sept. 29.* never got within fifty yards of the cavalry trenches. At 6.15 a.m. the British infantry attacked again on the south and south-east, and drove the enemy from the ridge. The 39th Garhwalis, at 7.30, had seized the bridge where the Aleppo road crosses the Aziziyeh Canal, and about the same hour the 90th Punjabis entered Ramadie. The cavalry on the west, expecting another attack, saw Turkish masses approaching, and to their amazement observed white flags fluttering in their ranks. By 11 a.m. the whole enemy force had surrendered, including the commander Ahmed Bey, who had been fighting on the Euphrates since the start of the campaign.

Ramadie was a perfect example of an encircling operation carried out with dash and precision. It was the only important action on the Euphrates since Nasiriyeh in July 1915, and it yielded the largest number of prisoners of any single battle so far won by the British in Mesopotamia. Our captures included 3,454 Turks, of whom 145 were officers, 13 guns, 12 machine guns, 2 armed launches, 2 barges, and large quantities of arms and stores.

So much for the left of the British front. On the day on which Ramadie was fought the right wing pushed out from Beled Ruz, and occupied Mendeli, capturing 300 baggage camels and driving the Turkish garrison eastward into the hills. The

Turks had used the place as a supply station, and it was of some strategical importance, since it was linked by a mountain path with Harunabad on the Persian trunk road, and was therefore a possible base for a flank attack. During October Sir Stanley Maude continued to improve this side of his position.

*Oct. 18-* Between 18th and 20th October he drove the enemy from the Diala into 20. the Jebal Hamrin, and occupied the frontier town of Kizil Robat. The Turkish 13th Corps was forced to retreat towards Kifri, and the British flanks were clear for a fresh advance up the Tigris.

The Turkish 18th Corps lay entrenched<sup>\*</sup> at Tekrit. On 23rd October columns from that corps moved down both banks of the river, *Oct. 23.* approaching Samarra, but fell back on the appearance of British troops. On 2nd November our advance guard found the enemy

*Nov. 2.* in position on the left bank of the river, opposite a place called Dur, twenty miles above Samarra. After a short engagement the Turks fell back upon Tekrit, the birthplace of Saladin the Great, a town some forty miles from Samarra, and the main advanced base of the Turkish Army of

*Nov. 5.* Mesopotamia. On Monday, 5th November, we came in touch with the strong enemy position there. At our first attack we carried the first two lines of trenches, and beat off a counter-attack, while our cavalry worked round the enemy's right flank, and our guns from across the river shelled his communications with the north. In the afternoon we attacked again, and the cavalry on our left charged into the trenches and cut down

many of the retreating Turks. That evening the enemy blew up his dumps, set fire to his stores, and retreated at his best speed, and on the morning of 6th November we occupied Tekrit.

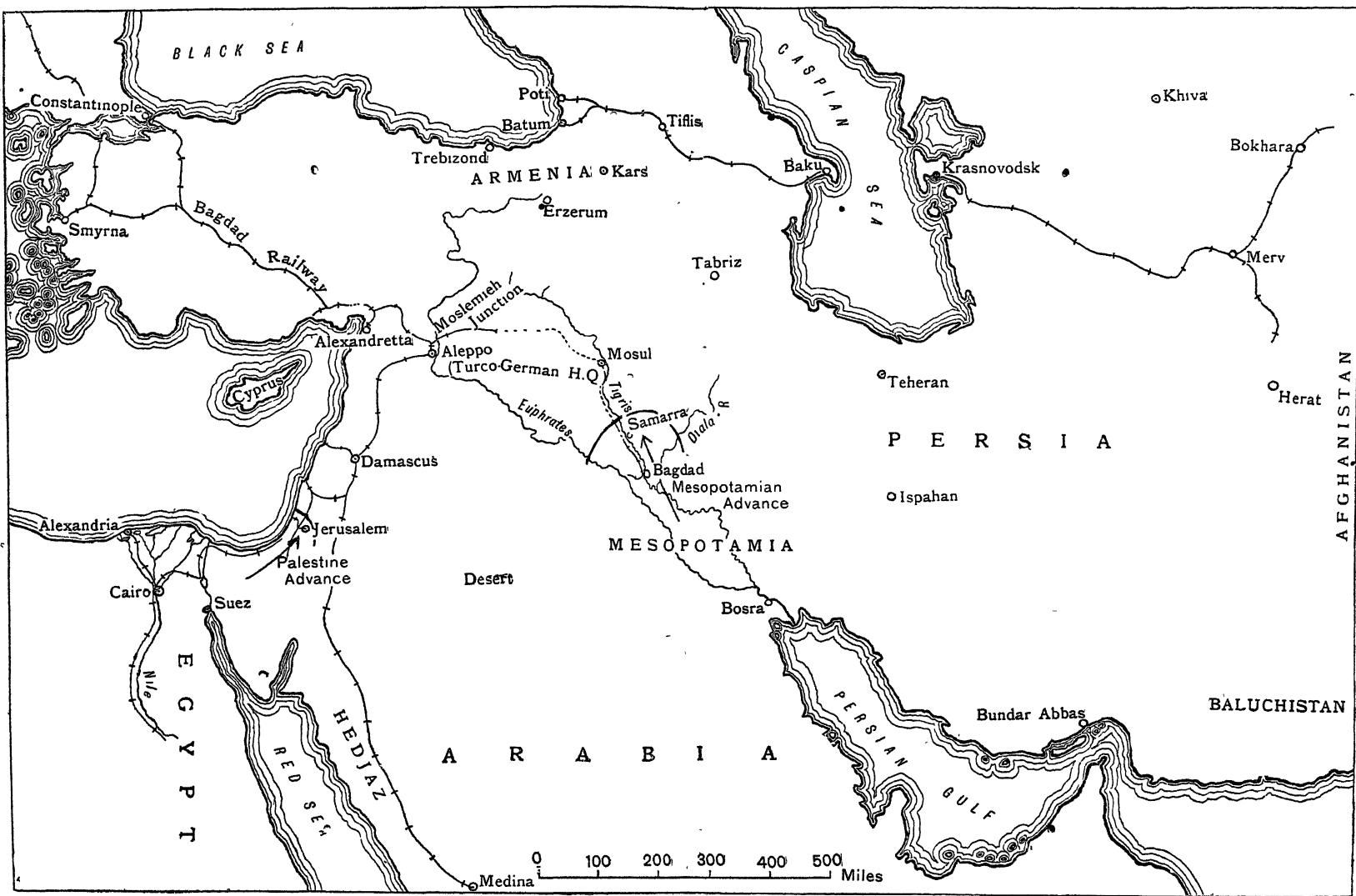
Sir Stanley Maude was now only some hundred miles from Mosul ; but the river beyond Tekrit was full of rapids, so that water transport was not possible in a further advance. His next step must therefore be to clear the new advanced bases of Kifri and Kirkuk, seventy miles east of Tekrit. Here a much used road to Mosul, traversing the foothills of the Persian border, runs eastward of the swampy region where the northern spurs of the Jebel Hamrin flank the marshes of the Shatt-el-Adhaim. His victories had given him a strong position from the point of view both of supplies and of strategy, for the enemy had no good advanced bases from which Falkenhayn could launch his promised counter-stroke. Whatever might be coming from Aleppo, the British commander could await it with some confidence ; and if nothing came, the British occupation of enemy soil was growing weekly under his hand.

But Sir Stanley Maude was not destined to reap the full fruit of that which he had so wisely sown. On the evening of Sunday, 18th November, he died suddenly of cholera, the result of a draught of native milk which his courtesy forbade him to refuse. His death was a heavy blow to the Army of Mesopotamia and to the British cause. In little more than a year he had sprung into fame, and his reputation was the most valuable which a commander can acquire—that of one who did not blunder, whose heart never failed him, who was as patient and methodical in conceiving a plan

as he was swift in executing it, who cared most zealously for the welfare of his men. Success followed his banner because he had taken pains to ensure it. His personal character was simple and kindly, and he was both loved and trusted by all who worked with him. These have happily been the characteristics of many British generals, and Sir Stanley Maude was the type of soldier to produce which is the peculiar glory of his nation. He was so modest and unrhetorical that it was only the tragic shortness of his career that made the world realize its brilliance. He had taken over the Army of Mesopotamia at a time when it was dispirited by failure and distraught by mismanagement. He had made it one of the best organized and most efficient of British forces, and in the face of immense difficulties he had led it continually to victory. If we would realize the magnitude of the war, let us compare the popular reputation which attended his success with that which he would have won had the campaign on the Tigris been the only military enterprise of Britain. He had done more than Lord Wolseley had ever done in the course of a long life ; and Kut and Bagdad were far greater achievements than Omdurman. Had he fought his battles twenty years earlier he would have had the prestige in the popular mind which fell to Wolseley and Kitchener ; but so vast was now the scale of British operations that he ranked with most people as only one of many capable commanders.

The problem in Palestine was not unlike that in Mesopotamia. Much had been won, but as yet neither security nor any decisive success ; and





Sketch Map of South-Western Asia, showing the railways and river lines and the strategic connections of the two British expeditions.



Falkenhayn was at Aleppo with orders to restore to Turkey her lost territory. If the British did not advance, they would certainly not be permitted to remain where they were. Two facts, however, simplified Sir Edmund Allenby's task as compared with that of Sir Stanley Maude. He had a safer position both to defend and to advance from, for the railway from Egypt was close at his heels, and his left flank was guarded by the sea, where British warships could operate. Again, he had before him a tangible and practicable objective. Mosul was far from Bagdad, and its capture would have complicated rather than relieved Maude's position, since it would have been all but impossible to hold it. But Jerusalem was near ; if won, there was no reason why it should not be retained ; and its capture would resound throughout the inhabited earth. Its military value might be small, but the moral value of its occupation was incalculable. Every consideration urged Sir Edmund Allenby to press on towards the cradle city of Christendom.

He had taken over from Sir Archibald Murray the command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force at the end of June, and his first duty was to report. The enemy positions lay from Beersheba north-west to the sea at Gaza, along the main road which links the two towns, a front of some thirty miles. Gaza and its neighbouring villages had been converted into a strong fortress, and the rest of the line was a series of groups of fortified redoubts—at Khirbet Sihan, at Atawineh, at Hareira, and at Beersheba itself, the groups being on an average a little over a mile apart, save that four and a half miles intervened between Beersheba and Hareira. The British front

was in close touch with the Turks at Gaza, but in the centre and right was separated from them by some miles of waterless desert. The enemy had greatly strengthened his defences since the spring battles. He had built branch lines running west from the Central Palestine railway to Deir Sined, north of Gaza, which gave him good lateral communications ; he had considerably increased his numbers ; and he had so elaborated and connected his strong points that his front was now practically continuous between his two flanking fortresses. The Turkish forces which faced Sir Edmund Allenby were many times more formidable than the loose and scattered line which Sir Archibald Murray had moved against in March.

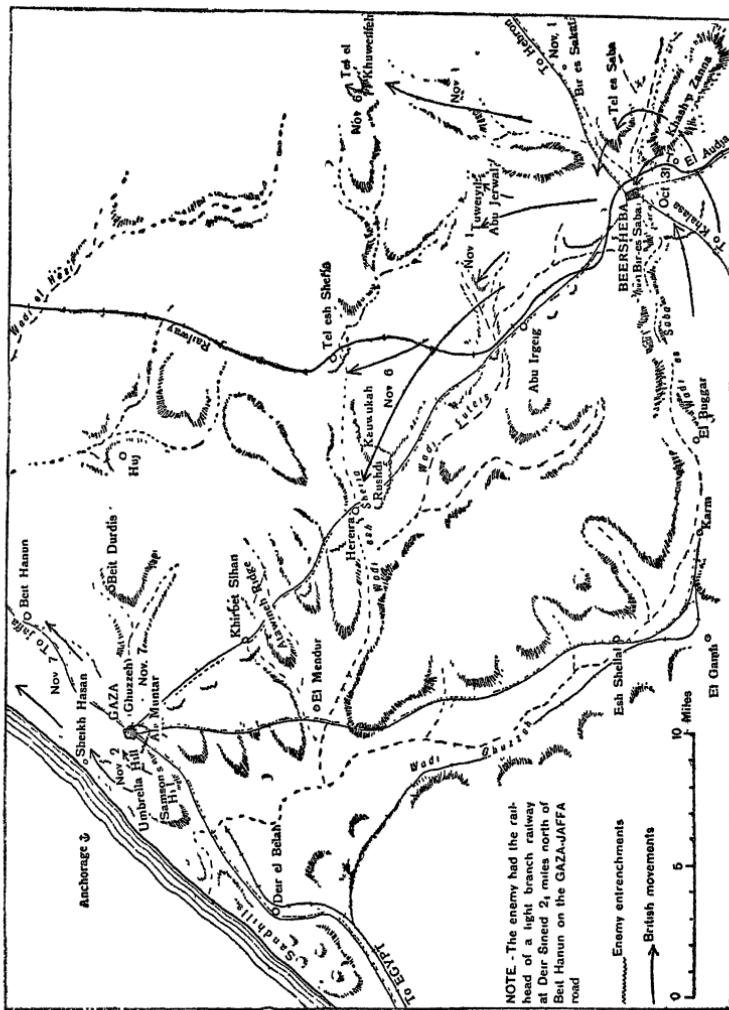
A frontal attack on such a position was not likely to succeed. Nor could the line be turned on the western flanks, for there was not space to manœuvre between Gaza and the sea. But as Sir Edmund Allenby considered the enemy front, he observed that it had certain gaps. One was between Ali Muntar and Sihan, but the most notable was that between Hareira and Beersheba. The latter town was virtually a detached and separate defensive system. If the enemy position was to be turned, it could only be on the east, on the line from Hareira to Sheria on the railway. If that enterprise were successful, the difficult ridge running south-east from Gaza would be taken in rear, and the British would be operating against an open flank. But to gain a starting-point for such a movement, the isolated fortress of Beersheba must first be mastered.

In the spring Sir Archibald Murray had considered the possibilities of this plan, and had re-

jected it on the ground that it would bring his communications parallel to his front. But in the meantime we had improved our line of supply, and the desert railway had been continued first to Shellal and then towards Karm, while lines were in process of construction from Gamli, the extreme point on the British right, to El Buggar, and on our left from Deir el Belah to Wadi Ghuzzi. The main problem before Sir Edmund Allenby was water and transport. There was good and abundant water at Beersheba, as also at Sheria and Hareira, but nowhere else in the immediate battleground; and there was also the danger that the enemy might destroy the wells in case of a retreat. He had, therefore, to be prepared to supply his troops with water from his own bases for a period which might amount to a week or more. Again, there were no good roads south of the line Gaza-Beersheba, so motor and wheeled transport was unreliable. Camels were the chief stand-by, and the 30,000 we possessed were all allotted to the right wing, which might have to operate twenty miles or more beyond railhead.

The first step was the capture of Beersheba, and for this Sir Edmund Allenby proposed an encircling movement not unlike that adopted at the First Battle of Gaza. The mean little town, which seems an oasis only to the traveller whose eyes are weary of the red rocks of the Sinai desert, lay below the southern end of the *massif* of Hebron. From the hills in the east and north-east descend numerous deep-cut water-courses, dry in summer, but in winter filled with roaring torrents. Of these, the most notable is the Wadi Saba, coming down from the east, south of which, towards the El Auja rail-

The Gaza-Beersheba Front.



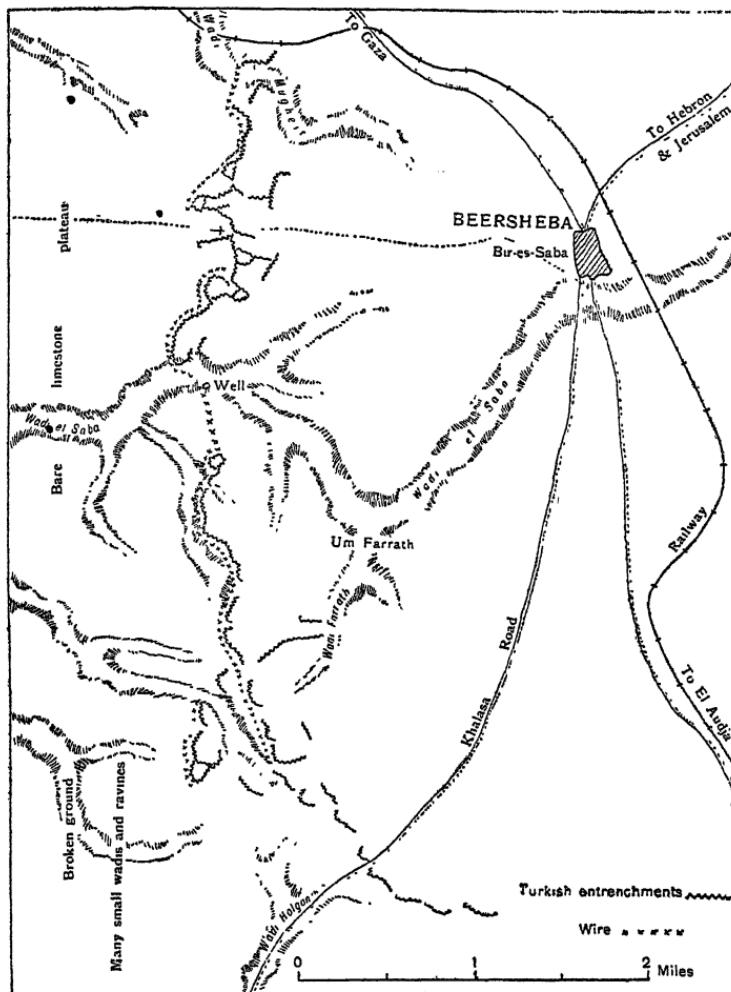
way, lies Hill 1070. Sir Edmund Allenby proposed to attack the south and south-east defences between the Khalasa road and the Wadi Saba with two infantry divisions, while the Imperial Camel Corps and part of the 53rd Division of Welsh Territorials made a holding attack north of the Wadi. The cavalry were to be sent in a wide circuit to cover the town from the east and north, and get astride the main road to Hebron. In the meantime Gaza was to be heavily bombarded, as if an attack were preparing in that quarter.

On 27th October the Turks made a reconnaissance in force towards Karm, cut up some Yeomanry outposts which covered our railway construction, and were driven back by the arrival of the 53rd Division. That day the shelling of Gaza began, and on the 30th the bombardment was assisted by British and French warships from the sea. On the evening of the 30th the force designed for the Beersheba attack was concentrated at its starting-point, and in the bright moonlight the march to the battle position was completed. In order to "prepare" our attack on the main defences, and to bring up field guns for wire-cutting, Hill 1070 must first be carried. After a short but very heavy bombardment this was rushed by London troops by 8.45 a.m. on the morning of the 31st, and the guns came into position.

At 12.15 the two British infantry divisions attacked the main defences between the Wadi Saba and the Khalasa road. It was a fine performance, and with singularly few casualties the whole position had fallen by one o'clock, with the exception of

a few redoubts which held out till the evening. Meantime the cavalry, after a night ride of more than thirty miles, had in the early morning reached the high ground five miles east of the town. Below them lay the open and treeless plain between Beersheba and the skirts of the hills. This ground was commanded by the hill Tel es Saba, north of the Wadi Saba, a place 1,000 feet high, which was defended on the south by the steep banks of a ravine. It was strongly held, but about 3.30 in the afternoon the New Zealand and Australian Horse had carried it, and were clearing up the German machine-gun posts between it and the town. An Australian brigade had been sent north to secure the hill of Bir es Sakaty, on the Hebron road. This was accomplished by one o'clock, and escape was denied to the enemy in that quarter. All through the afternoon fighting went on in the open plain, where the main force of the cavalry, working in small bodies, was endeavouring to close in from the east. The end came just before the dark fell, when the Australian Light Horse, leaping the enemy trenches, galloped into Beersheba, and the place fell. The garrison was put out of action, some 2,000 prisoners and thirty guns were taken, and the way was now prepared for a blow on the enemy's exposed left flank between Hareira and Sheria.

The next stage was the frontal attack on Gaza, designed as a subsidiary operation to attract the Turkish reserves to that sector. The line of attack was that which had been entrusted to the 53rd Division in the battle of 17th April. The objective was the 6,000 yards front from Sheikh Hasan on the sea, 2,500 yards north-west of Gaza, to the



The Defences of Beersheba.

ridge which was called Umbrella Hill,\* 2,000 yards

\* Umbrella Hill was about 500 yards north of the British position on Samson's Ridge.

south-west of the town. It was an ambitious objective, for there was a long space between our front lines and those of the enemy, and the sand dunes of the coast made heavy going. The first step was to take Umbrella Hill, which commanded the ground to the west, and at eleven o'clock on the

*Nov. 1.* night of 1st November this was carried by part of the 52nd Division of Scottish Lowland Territorials. At 3 a.m. on the morning of

*Nov. 2.* the 2nd, in the darkness before dawn, the main attack was delivered. It was completely successful : almost all the objectives were gained ; 450 prisoners were taken ; so far from the enemy being able to reinforce his left flank, one of his reserve divisions had to be sent to Gaza ; and the capture of Sheikh Hasan had given us a position outflanking the town on the west.

All was now ready for the major operations in the east ; but water and transport difficulties compelled Sir Edmund Allenby to move more slowly

*Nov. 1.* than he had hoped. On the morning of 1st November the 53rd Division and the Camel Corps advanced into the hills north of Beersheba, with the object of securing the flank of the main attack on the line Sheria-Hareira, while mounted troops took the Hebron road towards Dhaberiyyeh, in the hope of finding water and securing the new motor road from Sheria. That night the 53rd held a line from Towl Abu Jerwal, six miles north of Beersheba, to four miles north-east of Abu Irgeig, on the main railway ; and Abu Irgeig itself was occupied by the Irish 10th Division. The cavalry was meantime in conflict with the enemy farther north round the hill and wadi of Khuweilfeh. As we

advanced in that direction we found the Turks strongly posted, and their forces increasing. On the 4th and 5th they did their utmost to drive our flank guard back upon Beersheba ; and by the evening of the 5th the best part of three Turkish divisions—the 16th, 19th, and 27th—had been identified around Khuweilfeh, while more infantry and the bulk of the Turkish cavalry were farther north towards the Hebron road. All the available enemy reserves were being employed in the counter-attack.

Sir Edmund Allenby refused to allow this threat on his flank to divert him from his main scheme. “The country north of Beersheba,” he wrote, “was exceedingly rough and hilly, and very little water was to be found there. Had the enemy succeeded in drawing considerable forces against him in that area, the result might easily have been an indecisive fight (for the terrain was very suitable to their methods of defence), and my own striking force would probably have been made too weak effectively to break the enemy’s centre in the neighbourhood of Sheria-Hareira. This might have resulted in our gaining Beersheba, but failing to do more—in which case Beersheba would only have been an incubus of the most inconvenient kind.” He prepared to attack at once the main position at Kauwukah and Rushdi, which covered the Sheria-Hareira line.

During the night of the 5th the troops of assault were well west of the railway, and before dawn were in position. The battle plan was for the London and Irish troops to attack on the British left towards Kauwukah, while dismounted Yeomanry advanced on the right towards Sheria. On the

extreme right flank the 53rd Division was to move on Tel el Khuweilfeh. The troops attacked at

Nov. 6. dawn, and Sir Edmund Allenby's boldness was justified. By midday most of the objectives had been won, Kauwukah and Rushdi were taken, and the Irish entered Hareira. By the evening the Yeomanry were in Sheria station; and the 53rd Division, assisted by the Camel Corps, had carried Tel el Khuweilfeh after severe fighting. Long before the dark fell the cavalry had ridden northward, with orders to occupy Huj and Jemmamah.

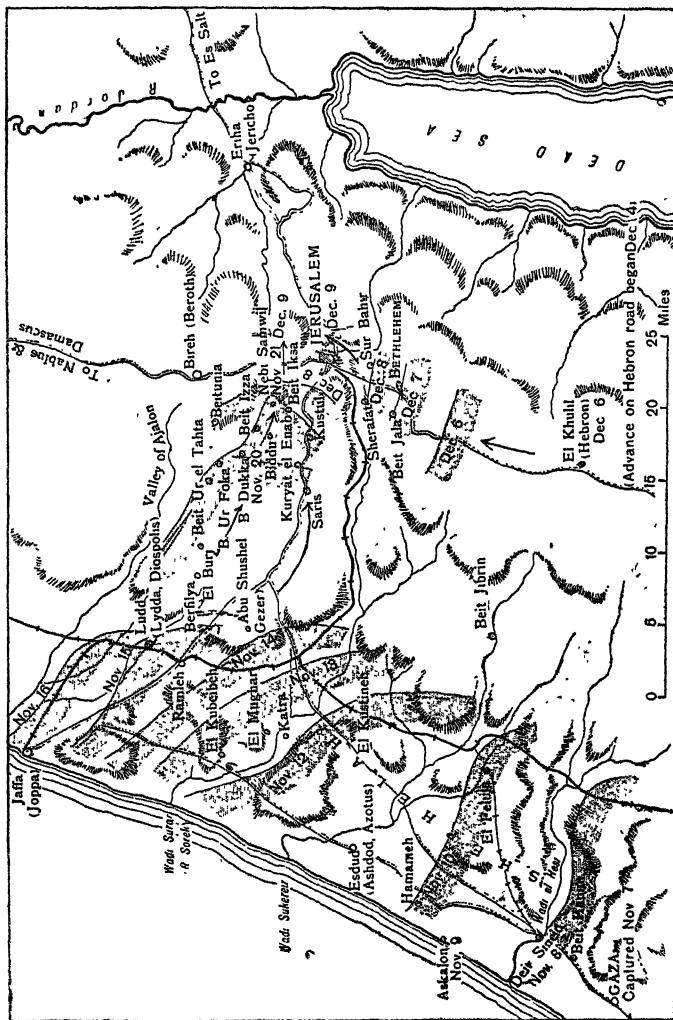
That night the British left moved again upon Gaza, which for the past nine days had been under a continuous bombardment. They found little resistance. At Outpost Hill and Middlesex Hill and Ali Muntar, where in April our advance had been stayed, there was nothing but thin rearguards. The East Anglians on the left, the Scots in the centre, the Indians and West of England men on the right, together with the French and Italian detachments, had an open road before them, though Turkish batteries were still firing from Beit Hanun and Atawineh. By the evening of the 7th the British

Nov. 7. left wing had pushed ten miles up the coast, and seized the north bank of the Wadi Hesi, thereby preventing the enemy from making a stand on that line, while our cavalry was engaging the Turkish rearguards at Beit Hanun.

Gaza had fallen, not to assault, but to far-sighted and methodical strategy. At comparatively small cost Sir Edmund Allenby had rolled up the Turkish line from the left, and compelled it to a general retreat. The enemy had suffered some 15,000 casualties, including the loss of over 5,000 prisoners.

There were many rearguard actions. It was not till the morning of the 7th that the hill of Tel el Sheria fell, and that night the Turkish detachment which had held Atawineh made good its escape. There was a sharp encounter near Huj, where squadrons of the Worcester and Warwick Yeomanry captured twelve guns. Our airmen, who had done invaluable work throughout the battle, reported that the enemy was in full retreat, and, if hard pressed, was too demoralized to offer much resistance. The position, in the words of the official dispatch, was, that "operations had reached the stage of a direct pursuit by as many troops as could be supplied so far in front of railhead. The problem, in fact, became one of supply rather than of manœuvre."

It was a problem sufficiently hard; for water, where it existed, was in deep wells, and the enemy had damaged the machinery, so that its supply was slow and difficult. But speed was urgent, if the British were to reap the fruits of their victory. The main Turkish army was retreating north along the Philistine plain. If Sir Edmund Allenby could reach in good time Junction Station, where the Jerusalem line leaves the main railway to Damascus, he would cut off the Jerusalem army from their communications with the rest of the Turkish forces. The Turkish left, which had been driven back towards Hebron, hung on the wing of our advance; but, though it made several demonstrations, it was too weak to be capable of serious mischief. The Imperial Camel Corps was a sufficient flank guard in that direction. We were moving far from rail-head, we had a slender force for so great an undertaking, and our problem of supply grew more acute



The Advance to Jerusalem.

with every mile of advance. But we had a signal advantage in the demoralization of the enemy.

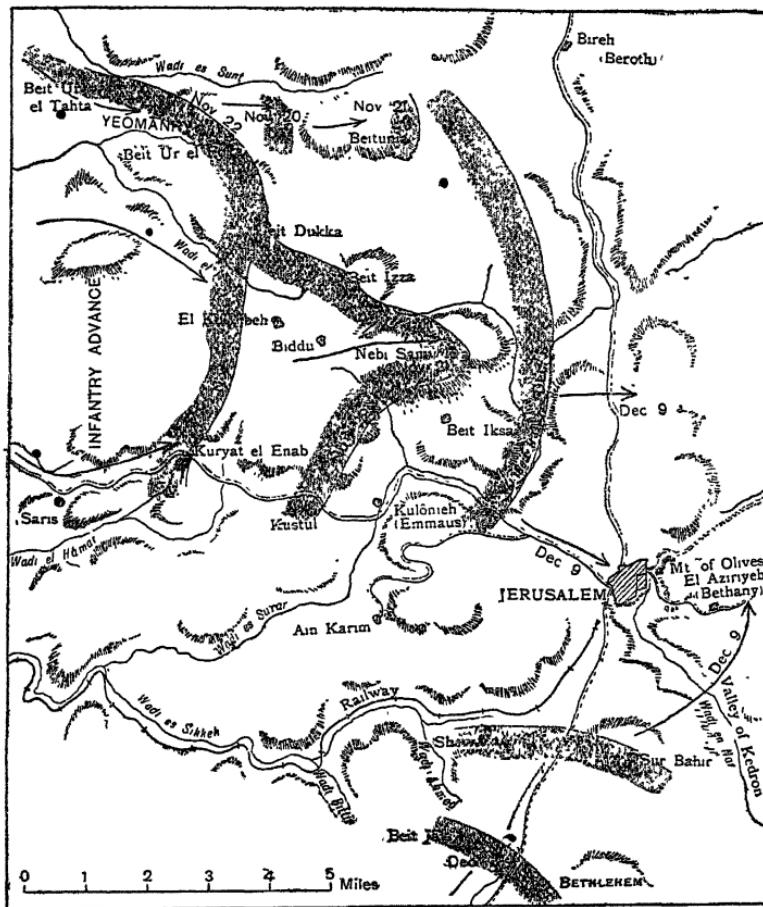
On the 9th we occupied Ascalon, the ruins of that city which had been the last conquest of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and which in its great days under the Khalifs had been called the "Bride of Syria," for the fairness of its palaces and gardens. On the 10th our line ran from Hamameh, four miles north of Ascalon, to the bend of the Central Palestine railway north-east of El Feluja. It was now apparent that the enemy resistance was stiffening, and that the dash for Junction Station would not be unresisted. "All the remainder of the Turkish army that could be induced to fight" had been brought up to stop our progress. The enemy held the line of Wadi Sukereir, with his centre at El Kustineh, and his left at Beit Jebrin. The weather was very hot, with the scorching *khamsin* blowing from the inland deserts; our troops were thirty-five miles from their rail-head; and the numerous wadis and the sandy roads made marching arduous for men who had in the past fortnight fought many battles. Still we crept on, our left on the coast moving fastest, since the roads there were better, and on the morning of 13th November we were prepared to strike for Junction Station. The enemy's right flank was already all but turned, and his troops lay on a front of twenty miles from El Kubeibeh to Beit Jebrin, the right half being parallel to and five miles in advance of the section of the railway between Ramleh and Junction Station. The orientation of the opposing fronts was now changing from that of west to east to that of north to south.

The attack of the 52nd Division on the 13th, assisted by a dashing cavalry charge, drove the enemy from Katrah (Cedron) and El Mughar, with a loss of 1,100 prisoners. That night we lay a mile west of Junction Station, and next morning the place

*Nov. 14.* was in our hands. The main objective had been brilliantly attained, and Sir Edmund Allenby's words describe a signal achievement in open warfare :—

" The enemy's army had now been broken into two separate parts, which retired north and east respectively, and were reported to consist of small scattered groups rather than formed bodies of any size. In fifteen days our force had advanced sixty miles on its right and about forty on its left. It had driven a Turkish army of nine infantry divisions and one cavalry division out of a position in which it had been entrenched for six months, and had pursued it, giving battle whenever it attempted to stand, and inflicting on it losses amounting, probably, to nearly two-thirds of the enemy's original effectives. Over 9,000 prisoners, about 80 guns, more than 100 machine guns and very large quantities of ammunition and other stores had been captured."

Jerusalem was now directly threatened, and Turk and German alike made frantic efforts to save it. Enver came from Constantinople, and departed after haranguing his defeated generals. Falkenhayn came from Aleppo, found he could do nothing, and returned to Nablus (Shechem) to watch events. Sir Edmund Allenby continued his advance on a broad front, pivoting somewhat on his right. His first step was to seize Jaffa, and his left wing pressed along the low range called the Shephelah, the western foot-hills of the Judæan highlands, and the old " debatable ground between Israel and the Philistines,



The Fight for the Neby Samwil Position and the Capture of Jerusalem.

between the Maccabees and the Syrians, between Saladin and the Crusaders.”\*\* There, on the 14th, at the village of Abu Shusheh—the ancient Gezer—the Turkish rearguard made a brief stand. It was

\* Sir G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*.

driven in next morning, and mounted troops occupied Ramleh and Ludd—the latter Nov. 15—Nov. 16. that Lydda where St. George of England is rumoured to have suffered martyrdom. Next day, the 16th, Jaffa (Joppa) was occupied without opposition.

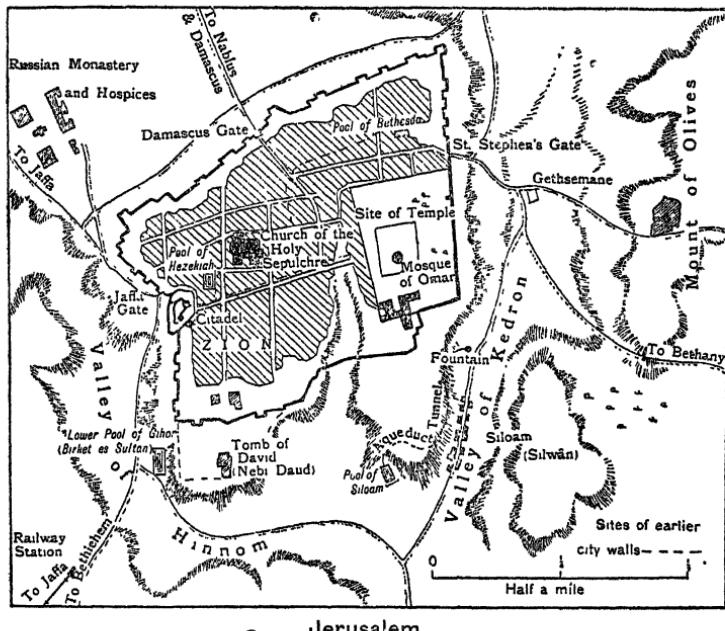
The enemy had been split in two, and there was no line on which he could unite nearer than the Tul Keram-Nablus position. If he had decided on that line he would probably evacuate Jerusalem. But before we could advance upon the capital certain steps must be taken. The finest troops in the world cannot march seventy miles in nine days, fighting all the way, without needing rest. Again, we had outrun our supplies, and time must be allowed for the railway behind us to be pushed forward to a reasonable distance. Finally, Sir Edmund Allenby had to make his position secure. The west side of the Judæan uplands consists of steep, bare spurs divided by narrow valleys, and many invaders coming from the coast had found defeat and destruction in those difficult passes. For our advance we had, beside the railway, a single decent highway, that which runs from Jaffa to Jerusalem. To safeguard the flank of that advance, and to secure our hold upon the coastal plain, it was necessary to get astride the one good road which traverses the hills from south to north, the road from Jerusalem to Nablus. The advance upon the Holy City could not, therefore, be by the directest route, more especially as the British commander was anxious to avoid any fighting in its immediate vicinity. He wished to conquer it, as he had conquered Gaza, by blows struck at a distance.

The stage in the campaign which followed was one of slow and hard-won progress in a most intricate country. On the 17th, in heavy rain, *Nov. 17.* the Yeomanry began to move from Ram-leh through the defiles of the hills towards Bireh (Beroth) by way of Beit ur el Tahta (Lower Beth-horon) and the valley of Ajalon—the old route between coast and plateau where Joshua won his unorthodox victory, and where Saladin in the Third Crusade frustrated all the chivalry of the West. By the evening of the next day Beit ur el *Nov. 18-* Tahta had been reached. On the 19th *19.* the advance of the infantry began by the main Jaffa road. One part was to move to Kuryat el Enab (Kirjath Jearim) with Australian mounted troops on its flank, and then strike north to Bireh by way of Biddu; while the other was to advance in support through Berfilya to Beit Dukka, just south of the Ajalon valley. After some resistance in the narrow defile at Saris, Kuryat el Enab and Beit Dukka were taken by the *Nov. 20.* infantry on the 20th, and the Yeomanry came within five miles of the Nablus-Jerusalem road.

Next day, the 21st, an infantry detachment started for Bireh, and reached the ridge called Neby Samwil, where stood the tomb of Samuel *Nov. 21.* the Prophet, which had been shelled by the enemy. The hill was just under three miles from the Nablus road, and some five miles from Jerusalem. On their left the Yeomanry got within two miles of the road, near the place called Beitunia. The rain, which had made our transport most difficult, had now given place to clear, cold weather,

and Jerusalem, hidden in its hollow to the south-east, seemed already in our hands.

Suddenly the incalculable Turk all along the front developed a new power of resistance. He



counter-attacked violently at Neby Samwil on the Nov. 22. 22nd, and his artillery on the main road admirably supported his infantry, while ours was still far in the rear. He did not shake us ; but, on the other hand, we could make no progress. On the same day the Yeomanry at Beitunia was heavily assailed, and compelled to fall back to Beit ur el Foka (Upper Bethhoron). Before the road could be carried reliefs must be completed and the

guns brought forward. Accordingly we secured the line Kustul-Neby Samwîl-Beit Izza-Beit Dukka-Beit ur el Tahta, and for two weeks held our hand.

But the enemy was not inactive. From 25th November onward he made a series of attacks against our left wing on the coast, which at that time held the north bank of the Nov. 25. Auja, four miles beyond Jaffa, and our advanced posts had to retire across the river. On the 29th our line was temporarily broken north-east of Jaffa; and on the 30th the Yeomanry and the 52nd Division were heavily engaged between El Burj and Reit ur el Foka, while an attack was also delivered against the Neby Samwîl ridge. The enemy won no lasting success, and between the 27th Nov. 27- and the 30th we took 750 prisoners. 30. Meantime the fine weather allowed us to bring up our guns, develop the water supply, and improve the roads for the final advance.

The British line had now the shape of a sickle, with the centre of the curve flung far forward towards Jerusalem. It was necessary to bring up the handle, consisting of the Welsh 53rd Division and part of the cavalry, which had been watching Hebron and had not been seriously in action since the stubborn fight for Tel el Khuweilfeh on 6th November. Their advance began on Dec. 4. 4th December. Hebron, the ancient city of Abraham, was occupied without opposition, and by the evening of the 6th the advance Dec. 6. guards were ten miles north of the place. It was arranged that the line Bethlehem-Beitjala should be reached by the 7th, and that by dawn on the 8th the British right wing should be at Surbahir

and Sherafat, three miles south of Jerusalem. That day was fixed for the final closing in from west and north.

On the 7th the weather broke, and three days followed of incessant rain, which interfered seriously

*Dec. 7.* with our already difficult transport, while the mist complicated the work of the artillery. We had won the passes, and were fighting on the uplands ; but the deep valleys and rocky crests of the summit were not less arduous than the

*Dec. 8.* western slopes. At dawn on the 8th we attacked towards the Nablus road, and by noon the Londoners had advanced over two miles and were wheeling north-east to gain the road, while the Yeomanry had carried the Beit Iksa spur. But the right wing, advancing from Hebron, had taken longer than was expected ; and, since the western outskirts of Jerusalem seemed strongly held, the Londoners were compelled to retire their right, and form a defensive flank facing east. At this point they were one and a half miles west of Jerusalem.

Meantime, in the city itself all was confusion. When Falkenhayn departed for Nablus the heads of the various Churches had followed suit. Ali Fuad Pasha, the commander of the Turkish troops, issued proclamations full of the resolution to resist to the last, in one of which he made the curious claim that the Turks had held Jerusalem for thirteen hundred years. Arrests and confiscations were the order of the day, till the gun-fire on the western hills about 6th December warned the garrison that the British were at hand, and the exodus of Turkish civilians began. Sunday, the 9th, dawned, the festival of the Hanookah, which commemorates the

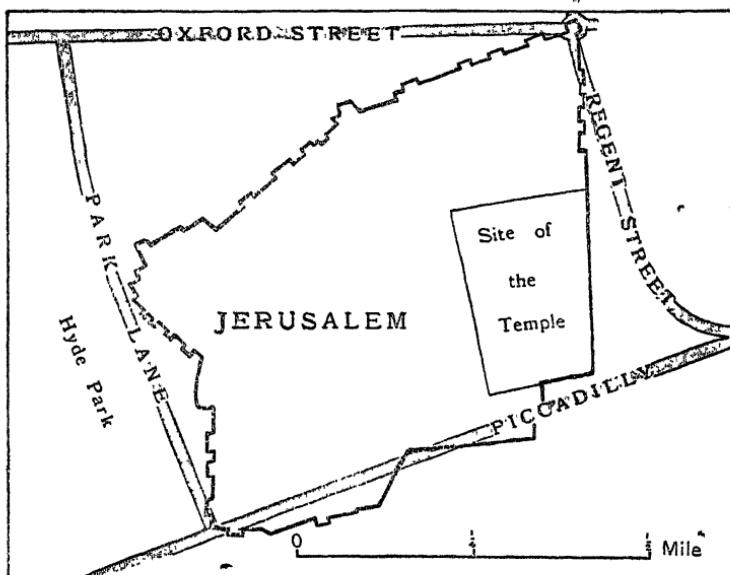
recapture of the Temple by Judas Maccabæus in 165 B.C. As the morning advanced, *Dec. 9.* hustled detachments of Turkish soldiers began to pour in at the Jaffa Gate, while an outgoing stream flowed eastward across the valley of Jehoshaphat.

For on that day the British, coming from the west, had found the enemy in retreat. The Londoners and the Yeomanry occupied a line across the Nablus road, four miles north of the city, and the 53rd Division on the south cut the main road to Jericho. Jerusalem was isolated, and at noon on the 9th the enemy sent out a parlementaire, and made his surrender. The last Turkish soldier straggled out of St. Stephen's Gate, and that evening British patrols were in the city.

On Tuesday, the 11th, Sir Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem by the Jaffa Gate, which the Arabs call "The Friend." Close by *Dec. 11.* was the breach made in the walls when the German Emperor in 1898 made his foolish pilgrimage. Far different was the entry of the British general. It was a clear, hot day, and the streets and housetops were thronged with black-coated, tarbushed Syrians and Levantines, and the more picturesquely clad peasants from the near villages, and Arabs from the fringes of the desert. There was no bunting or bell-ringing or firing of salutes. On foot, accompanied only by his staff, the commanders of the French and Italian detachments, and the military attachés of France, Italy, and the United States, he was received by the Military Governor and a guard representing all the nationalities engaged in the campaign. He turned to the right into the Mount Zion quarter, and at the

Citadel, at the base of the ancient Tower of David, his proclamation was read to the people.

" To the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Blessed and the people dwelling in the vicinity. The defeat inflicted upon the Turks by the troops under my command has resulted in the



Jerusalem.—Sketch showing the size of the city—(plan of the walls superposed on an outline plan of part of West London drawn to the same scale).

occupation of your city by my forces. I therefore here and now proclaim it to be under martial law, under which form of administration it will remain so long as military considerations make it necessary. However, lest any of you should be alarmed by reason of your experience at the hands of the enemy who has retired, I hereby inform you that it is my desire that every person should pursue his lawful business without fear of interruption.

" Furthermore, since your City is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind, and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore do I make known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer, of whatsoever form of the three religions, will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faiths they are sacred."

Then he quietly left the city. Yet no conqueror had ever entered it with more prestige. For centuries there had been current an Arab prophecy concerning a deliverer from the West, and in 1898 the people of Palestine had asked if the Kaiser was indeed the man. They were told that such would not be the manner of his coming, for the true saviour would bear the name of a Prophet of God, and would enter Jerusalem on foot, and would not appear till the Nile flowed into Palestine. To the peasants of Judæa the prophecy now seemed to be fulfilled, for the name of the English general was in Arabic the "Prophet," and his men had come into the land bringing with them the waters of Egypt.

So ended the latest of the vicissitudes suffered by the most famous of the world's cities. No other had endured such changes of fortune. In the thirty-three centuries of her history she had witnessed some twenty sieges and as many more blockades and occupations. She had been the prize fought for by conquerors from the Tigris, the Nile, the Tiber, the Bosphorus, the Rhone, and the Thames. Even five hundred years before Christ the author of the Book of Lamentations could write of her : " Be-

hold, and say if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow ! ” Her sanctity was as far-reaching as her trials. She was the Holy City alike to Jew and Christian and Moslem, and their devotion was less to the relics within her walls than to the compelling power of the faiths to which she had given birth, and the ideals of which she had been the battle-ground : so that dreamers of every age rebuilt her bulwarks in the heaven of their imagining, and her name became synonymous with that “ shadie citie of palme-trees ” which is the goal of all human endeavour. Other conquerors had seized her as prize of war or to glorify their special creed, but now she was held in trust for all creeds that did her honour. It is scarcely fantastic to see in the entry of the Allies on that December day a parable of the cause for which they fought. They would recover and make free the sacred places of the human spirit which their enemies sought to profane and enslave, and in this task they walked reverently, as on hallowed ground.

## CHAPTER CXLVIII.

### THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI.

Situation after Close of Third Battle of Ypres—Reasons for further Operations—Possibilities of a Surprise—The Cambrai Sector—Sir D. Haig's Plan—Its Difficulties—British and German Dispositions at Cambrai—The Tanks—Attack of 20th November—Its Success—The Bridge of Masnières—Performance of Cavalry—The Fighting on 21st November—Situation after the First Forty-Eight Hours—Sir D. Haig decides to go on—The Struggle for the Bourlon Ridge—Position on 29th November—The German Counterstroke of 30th November—The British Right broken—Stand of the 29th Division—Counter-attack of the Guards—The British Left holds at Bourlon—The Line drawn in to Flesquières—Summary of the Battle—The New German Tactics—British Military Position at the End of 1917—End of the German Defensive.

ON 6th November with the taking of Passchendaele the Third Battle of Ypres drew to a close. It had been a protracted and costly operation. On 29th October, in both Houses of Parliament, the leaders of all parties had paid grateful tribute to the exploits of the British Army. *Nov. 6.*

“ When I read of the conditions under which they fought,” said the Prime Minister, “ I marvel that the delicate and sensitive instrument of the human nerve and the human mind can endure them without derangement. The campaigns of Stonewall Jackson fill us with admiration and with wonder, as we read how that man of iron led his troops through the mire and swamps of Virginia ; but his troops

were never called upon to live for days and nights in morasses under ceaseless thunderbolts from a powerful artillery, and then march into battle through an engulfing quagmire under a hailstorm of machine-gun fire.” But splendid as the record had been, the British High Command could not contemplate the situation with much comfort. Many German divisions had been broken at Ypres, but the stagnation of the winter war would give them time to rest and refit. Already large enemy forces had been brought from Russia, more were on their way, and there were many more to come. If the enemy were left in peace, he had it in his power to create a dangerous situation for the spring. Moreover, Italy, fighting desperately on the Piave, deserved by all the laws of war some relief in the shape of an Allied diversion. Weary as his troops might be, Sir Douglas Haig was not able to grant them the rest which they had earned and most urgently required.

If another blow was to be struck, it must not be delayed. The operations at Passchendaele had compelled the Germans to concentrate heavily on the threatened front and reduce their strength in other sectors. These dispositions still continued ; but presently, when it was clear that the pressure had been relaxed, their troops would be more evenly distributed. If the British could strike at once in an unexpected quarter, they might have the benefit of a real surprise, and at the moment the thoughts of the Allied Command, like that of the German General Staff, were running on some means of breaking the rigidity of trench warfare and restoring the element of the unexpected. Should such a blow succeed, it would have a real effect upon the

*moral* of the enemy, for after Third Ypres he would not anticipate a fresh Allied effort yet awhile. It would give him an uneasy winter, for it would not permit him to reduce the strength of any part of his front, as had been his former practice, and so would cripple that heavy local concentration which might be looked for in the spring. In deciding the question a final consideration affected Sir Douglas Haig. The British tanks had greatly increased in number and efficiency. At Third Ypres ground and weather had prevented their effective use, and decreased their reputation in the enemy's eyes. But a terrain might be found where they could work freely, and if so, they might form a further element of surprise. The mind of Sir Douglas, like that of Ludendorff, was working towards the discovery of a new tactics.

Having decided on his policy, the British Commander-in-Chief looked around for a suitable area for its application. He found it in that sector of the old Siegfried Line which lay in front of Havrincourt Wood, between the Bapaume-Cambrai road and the Scheldt Canal. It was a country of rolling downs, grey with the withered grasses of November, and patched with the rank and blackened growths of thistle and dock and ragwort which spring up on land once closely tilled and now derelict. From any ridge east of Bapaume the observer could grasp the terrain at a glance. Eight miles from our front rose the spires and factory chimneys of the town of Cambrai. Half-way the deep cutting of the Scheldt Canal zigzagged across the landscape, for the most part empty of water, but forming a better barrier than any running stream. On the west side of the

canal the long Flesquières ridge ran north and south, rising on the left to the dominating point of Bourlon Wood between the Arras and Bapaume roads—a wood of oak and ash, with a dense undergrowth, and still untouched by shell-fire. East of the canal the ground fell away to the flat plains of the Scheldt, but the village of Rumilly offered a flank position on the last incline of the uplands.

The merits of this area for a surprise attack were many. In the first place, it was dry, open country, where tanks could operate. In the second place, behind the British lines, notably in the big wood of Havrincourt, there were places where they might be concealed without the knowledge of the Germans. In the third place, the sector was very thinly held by the enemy. Finally, any considerable British advance would endanger a vital part of the enemy's front, and seriously hamper his communications. Cambrai, a main centre, would be brought under our guns, as would the great lateral railway which ran through it. If Bourlon could be won, the canal crossed, and a defensive flank established towards Rumilly, we should command the main Arras-Cambrai road, and take in rear the enemy positions in the southern part of the Drocourt-Quéant line and the Sensée valley.

The British tactical plan was conceived on novel lines. There was to be no preliminary bombardment. Tanks were relied upon to break through the enemy's wire, and the six infantry divisions were to advance on a six-mile front, supported as far as possible by our guns shooting at unregistered targets. The German defences were complicated and very strong. First came certain forward posi-

tions in the nature of outposts at the ridge of La Vacquerie and at the north-eastern corner of Havrincourt Wood—a method borrowed from von Armin's system in the Ypres salient. Behind lay the Siegfried Line proper, running north-west to Havrincourt from the Scheldt Canal at Banteux—a line with specially wide trenches which, it was hoped, would prevent the passage of tanks. A mile or so behind that lay the famous Siegfried Reserve Line, tunnelled to a great depth and heavily wired. Between three and four miles to the east ran the final German position, covering Cambrai, from Beaurevoir by Masnières to Marquion.

Sir Douglas Haig's object was not the capture of Cambrai ; that might happen, but his advance in the direction of the town was rather to secure his right flank. His main objective was towards the north-east, Bourlon, and the Arras-Cambrai road. He hoped to break through all the enemy's lines of defence on the first day ; and, since he believed that no serious German reinforcements could appear before forty-eight hours, he considered that he would have time to exploit and secure any success. The cavalry were to be kept ready to go through and disorganize the enemy communications, and he arranged with General Pétain to have a strong French force of infantry and cavalry within call in the event of fortune providing one of those happy chances which he had hitherto been denied. The possibilities which he had in mind are best described in the words of his dispatch :—

" In view of the strength of the German forces on the front of my attack, and the success with which secrecy was

maintained during our preparations, I had calculated that the enemy's prepared defences would be captured in the first rush. I had good hope that his resisting power behind those defences would then be so enfeebled for a period that we should be able on the same day to establish ourselves quickly and completely on the dominating Bourlon Ridge from Fontaine-notre-Dame to Mœuvres, and to secure our right flank along a line including the Bonavis Ridge, Crèvecœur, and Rumilly to Fontaine-notre-Dame. Even if this did not prove possible within the first twenty-four hours, a second day would be at our disposal before the enemy's reserves could begin to arrive in any formidable numbers. Meanwhile, with no wire and no prepared defences to hamper them, it was reasonable to hope that masses of cavalry would find it possible to pass through, whose task would be thoroughly to disorganize the enemy's system of command and inter-communication in the whole area between the Canal de l'Escaut, the river Sensée and the Canal du Nord, as well as to the east and north-east of Cambrai. My intentions as regards subsequent exploitation were to push westward and north-westward, taking the Hindenburg Line in reverse from Mœuvres to the river Scarpe, and capturing all the enemy's defences, and probably most of his garrisons, lying westward of a line from Cambrai northwards to the Sensée, and south of that river and the Scarpe. Time would have been required to enable us to develop and complete the operation ; but the prospects of gaining the necessary time, by the use of cavalry in the manner outlined above, were, in my opinion, good enough to justify the attempt to execute the plan."

There will be few to deny that this plan was both bold and feasible. As a scheme for a substantive operation it was at least as skilful and prudent as any which the British High Command had yet adopted. But at this point arises a difficulty. Was the battle which followed to be considered a substantive operation ? Sir Douglas Haig has described how weary were his troops after the close of Third Ypres ; how inadequately his losses had

been replaced ; and explained that many of the new drafts included in the ranks of his armies were not yet fully trained. In such circumstances a substantive operation—that is, one designed to occupy and hold a considerable extent of new ground—must be hazardous in the extreme ; for even if only a small force was required in the first instance, and if this force could be supplied from comparatively fresh divisions, it was certain that, as the battle developed, reserves must be found, and that these could only be got from tired and depleted troops who had already borne the brunt of Third Ypres. It has been the fashion in many quarters to describe Cambrai as no more than a raid on a generous scale. Now, it is the essence of a raid that it does not occupy ground. The men engaged in it harass and weaken the enemy, and then return to their old line. But Sir Douglas Haig contemplated an advance on the first day of between five and six miles, and thereafter elaborate operations on the north and north-west. Such successes would in any case demand large reinforcements. Again, the essence of a raid is that, if the enemy proves unexpectedly strong, it is given up. But since this attempt was on so large a scale, would it be possible to withdraw the troops after their initial advance, should the situation change ? Was it not more probable that they would become so deeply committed that they must continue the battle ? It may fairly be said in criticism of the Cambrai plan that it contemplated a limited and local operation, which in the nature of things could not be limited and localized, much less easily broken off. It designed a raid with a few divisions ; but such a raid must

inevitably develop into a battle and demand supports, and these supports could only come from troops who *ex hypothese* were in no condition for a new and desperate conflict.

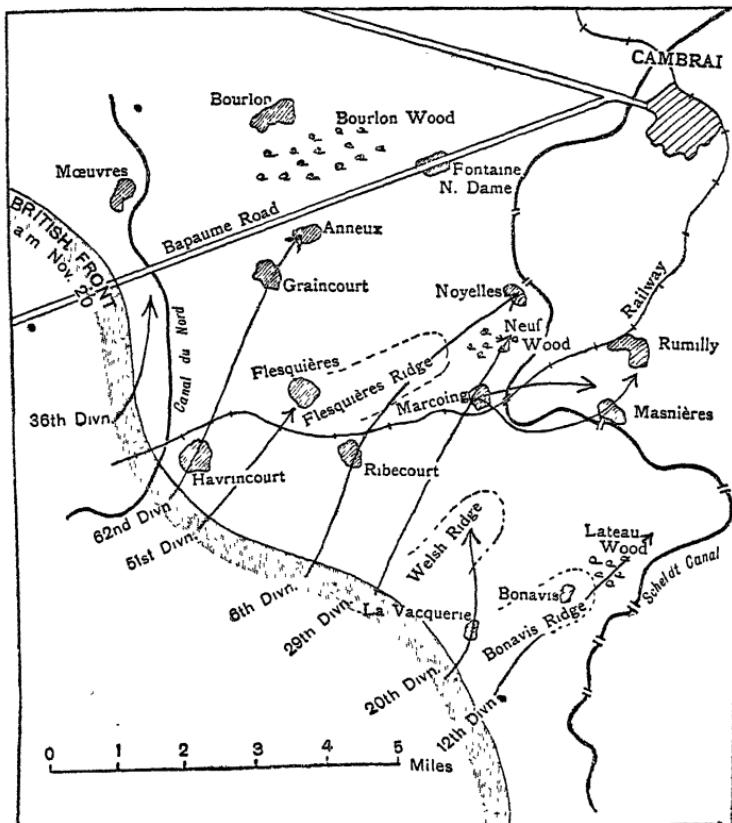
The Cambrai sector from Bullecourt to the Oise was held by the German Second Army, under von der Marwitz, which at the moment had only eleven divisions in line. In the threatened area it had only three—from left to right, the 5th, the 2nd, and the 20th, with three more in reserve. The British force was the Third Army, which had not been seriously engaged since the Battle of Arras in the spring. When Sir Edmund Allenby was transferred to Palestine in June it was placed under Sir Julian Byng, who had commanded the Canadian Corps at the taking of Vimy Heights. On the six-mile front of the main attack he had in line six divisions—from left to right, the 36th, 62nd, 51st, 6th, 20th, and 12th. On the left, in the Bullecourt area, two divisions, the 16th and the 3rd, were detailed for a subsidiary attack. In immediate support in the main area was the 29th Division. The mounted force at his disposal contained the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th Cavalry Divisions.

Secrecy was vital in the matter, and Sir Julian Byng directed the preparations with consummate skill. The flotillas of tanks were assembled in every possible place which offered cover, notably in Havrincourt Wood. The tank is not a noiseless machine, and it says much for the ingenuity of the Third Army that the enemy had no inkling of our designs. It was anxious work, for a single enemy aeroplane over Havrincourt or a single indiscreet prisoner taken would have wrecked the plan.

## THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI.

101

Before the attack an enemy raid took prisoners, but he seems to have learned little from them, though it would appear that he suspected tanks in the



Sketch showing the Advance of the Infantry Divisions  
on November 20.

neighbourhood and served out special ammunition. Had he been really forewarned, he might have so honeycombed his front with contact mines that

our advance would have been completely frustrated. The weather favoured Sir Julian Byng. The days before the assault saw the low grey skies and the clinging mist of late November.

Tuesday, 20th November, dawned with heavy clouds that promised rain before evening. At

Nov. 20. twenty minutes past six a solitary gun broke the silence. It was the signal, and from just north of the Bapaume road to the hamlet of Gonnelieu in the south a long line of tanks crept forward into the fog, their commander, General Hugh Elles, leading them in his "flagship." Gas and smoke were released everywhere from the Scarpe to St. Quentin, and in front of the tanks a dense smoke barrage blinded the enemy's guns. The British artillery broke loose and deluged the German rear with shells, while, behind the tanks, quietly and leisurely moved the six divisions of assault. At Epehy on the south and at Bullecourt on the north the subsidiary attacks were launched at the same moment.

The enemy was taken utterly unawares. The tanks cut great lanes in his wire, broke up his machine-gun nests, and enfiladed his trenches, while the British infantry followed to complete the work. At once the outposts went, the main Siegfried Line followed soon, and presently the fighting was among the tunnels of the Reserve Line. By half-past ten that also had vanished, and the British troops, with cavalry close behind, were advancing to their final objectives in open country.

Let us glance at the progress of the several divisions. On the left, west of the Canal du Nord, the 36th (Ulster) Division drove the enemy from the

canal bank, pushed up the Siegfried Line, and carried the whole German trench system west of the canal as far as the Bapaume road. On their right the 62nd Division of West Riding Territorials began that brilliant advance which was to give them the honours of the day. They took Havrincourt village, turned northward, carried the Siegfried Reserve Line, and occupied Graincourt, where their accompanying tanks had the satisfaction of themselves destroying two anti-tank guns. Before evening they were in Anneux, an advance of four and a half miles from their original front—the longest advance that so far in the war any single British division had made in one day. South of the Yorkshiremen the 51st (Highland Territorials) were adding to their many laurels. They breasted the slopes of the Flesquières ridge, and carried the formidable defences of the château grounds by noon. They were held up, however, in front of the village, which remained uncaptured during the day, the apex of a sharp salient. Here our tanks suffered from direct hits from the German field guns beyond the crest of the ridge, many of them obtained by a German artillery officer who served a gun single-handed till he died at his post. “The great bravery of this officer,” says the official dispatch, “aroused the admiration of all ranks.”

South of Flesquières the 6th Division took Ribecourt, while the 20th Division, after disposing of La Vacquerie, stormed the defences of the hill which we called Welsh Ridge towards Marcoing. The 12th Division, on the extreme right, moved along the Bonavis ridge, and, after a fierce struggle, took Lateau Wood, which sheltered many German

batteries. Meantime the 29th Division had been pushed through between the 6th and the 20th as a spearhead. Accompanied by tanks, it took Marcoing and Neuf Wood and the passage at that point of the Scheldt Canal; while the 6th Division, advancing from Ribecourt in the afternoon, moved north and seized Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut. The 29th then turned south and entered Masnières, but not before the enemy had managed so to weaken the bridge over the canal that the first tank which tried to cross fell through. They had trouble in the north end of the village, with the result that the Germans had the chance to occupy Rumilly and the sector of their final line of defence south of it.

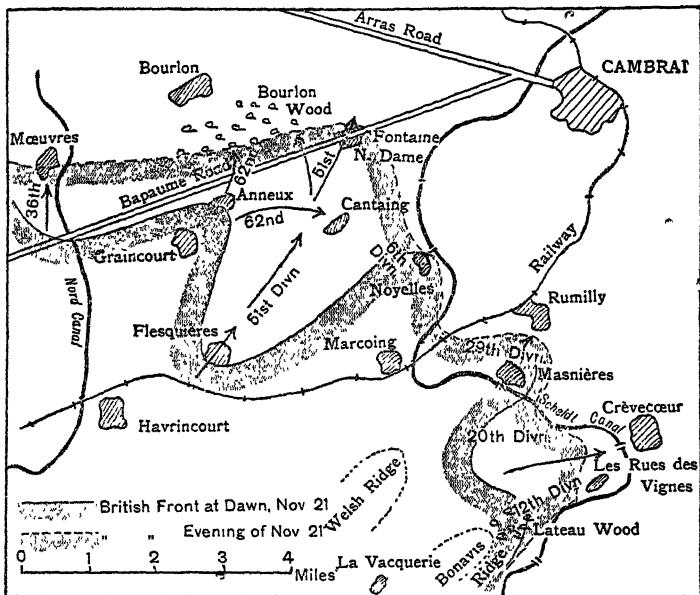
All this time the cavalry were fighting in close alliance with the infantry—the 1st Cavalry Division in the northern part of the battleground, and the 5th Cavalry Division in the south. They were moving on Cantaing and Anneux; but the vital point was the bridge at Masnières, and unfortunately that was half destroyed. This delayed what might have otherwise been the final blow to the enemy defence, for had the cavalry been able to cross the canal in force there was little between them and Cambrai. A temporary bridge was, indeed, constructed south of Masnières, and one squadron of the Fort Garry Horse, belonging to General Seely's Canadian Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division, crossed, broke through the Beaurevoir-Masnières line, charged and captured a German battery, cut up a body of 300 German infantry, and only retired when most of its horses had been killed or wounded.

The day closed with a remarkable record of success. The subsidiary attacks had done well, the

16th (Irish) and the 3rd Division having captured the remainder of the Siegfried Reserve Line at Bullecourt, with 700 prisoners. On the whole front already over 5,000 prisoners had been brought in. Sir Julian Byng had carried the outposts, the Siegfried Line, and the Siegfried Reserve Line on most of his front, and had broken into the final line at Masnières. He had won nearly all his objectives; but at three points, and vital points, he had not succeeded. He had not got Rumilly and Crèvecœur, and so had not yet obtained that defensive flank which he needed for his swing to the north. Nor had he won the crossings of the Scheldt Canal, and breached the final line widely enough to let the cavalry through. For this the destruction of the bridge at Masnières was to blame, and more especially, perhaps, the check of the 51st Division at Flesquières village. This last also prevented the attainment of the most important objective of all, the Bourlon ridge, the garrison of which had by now been reinforced. Only twenty-four hours remained to complete the work before the enemy would have received reinforcements. In that time Bourlon might be won, and perhaps Rumilly and Crèvecœur; but, now that the first shock of surprise had passed, the chance for the cavalry was gone.

The rain began to fall after midday on the 20th, and continued into the morning of the 21st. By 8 a.m. Flesquières village had fallen, *Nov. 21.* turned from the north-west, and by eleven the final German line had been breached to the north of Masnières. The enemy counter-attacked from Rumilly and was beaten off, and at Noyelles part of the 29th Division and dismounted

regiments of the 1st and 5th Cavalry Divisions were hotly engaged during the day. On our right we captured the hamlet of Les Rues des Vignes, between Bonavis and Crèvecœur, but lost it again; and our attack towards Crèvecœur itself was hung up by machine-gun fire at the canal crossings. On our



Sketch showing the Progress of the Infantry Divisions  
on November 21.

extreme left the 36th Division, pushing north of the Bapaume road, got into the skirts of Mœuvres, where they found a strong resistance. But the vital point was on the left centre, where the 51st and 62nd Divisions, assisted by tanks and squadrons of the 1st Cavalry Division, were struggling desperately

towards Bourlon. The advance began at 10.30 a.m., as soon as possible after the clearing of Flesquières. The West Riding troops completed the capture of Anneux, and early in the afternoon the 6th and the 51st Divisions took Cantaing, close upon the Scheldt Canal. The Highlanders pressed on to the edge of Bourlon Wood, and late in the evening took the village of Fontaine-notre-Dame, on the Bapaume road between Bourlon and Cambrai. Bourlon Wood itself was a nest of machine guns, which barred the infantry advance, though a few tanks penetrated some way into its recesses.

With dawn on the 22nd the forty-eight hours of grace ended, the period during which the enemy must fight without his reserves. His reinforcements were hurrying up; the night before the 1st Guards Reserve had arrived from Lens, and other divisions were on their way from Flanders. Our new line left the old front at a point half-way between Bourcies and Pronville, ran east through the skirts of Mœuvres to the Canal du Nord; then along the southern face of Bourlon Wood to Fontaine-notre-Dame, where it turned south-east, covering Cantaing, Noyelles, and Masnières to a point east of the Scheldt Canal half-way between the last-named village and Crèvecœur. Thence it passed along the eastern and southern slopes of the Bonavis ridge to our old front near Gonnelieu. We had failed to win certain vital positions for a defensive flank, such as Rumilly and Crèvecœur; above all, we did not hold the dominating ground of Bourlon Wood and village. Clearly we could not remain where we were. Either we must go on till Bourlon was taken, or fall back to the Flesquières ridge and

secure our gains. Sir Douglas Haig had now to decide whether to treat the action as a lucky raid, and hold himself fortunate for what he had already achieved, without risking more ; or to regard it as a substantive battle, and press for a decision.

Inevitably he leaned to the second alternative. To make the *gran rifiuto* when much has been won and still more seems within reach, is possible for few commanders, even when they have less weighty reasons for their conclusion than were now present to the mind of the British general. The choice which he now made had been really implied in his original plan. He was impressed by the acute significance of the Bourlon ridge. If he could only gain and hold it, the German front south of the Scarpe and Sensée would be turned, and the enemy must be compelled to abandon all the elaborate defences of that sector. It was such a nerve centre as we had rarely before had the chance of striking at. It was true that German reinforcements were arriving, and that our troops were so exhausted that we too must delay a little for reliefs. But he considered that any German reserves that could appear for several days would be only sufficient to replace the enemy losses in the past fighting, and that there was some evidence of a wholesale German withdrawal. In any case he believed that he had sufficient forces to strike at Bourlon before that position could be strengthened. Two divisions, under orders for Italy, had been placed at his disposal, and with this accession of strength he hoped to win the ridge forthwith. Lastly, there were ever present to his mind the needs of the Italian situation. Any pressure on the Cambrai front, even if unsuccessful

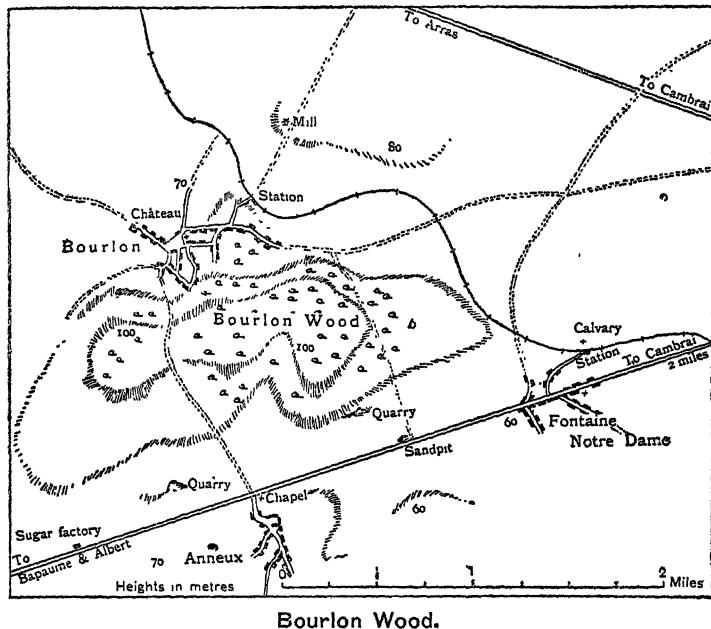
in its main object, would do something to relieve the strain on the Piave. He accordingly decided to continue the action till Bourlon was won. In the light of subsequent events it is clear that the decision was unwise. Sir Douglas Haig had too small a force to achieve his purpose and to defend his gains against the attack which the enemy could develop. But to foresee the future with precision is not in the power of the most sagacious commander, and to take risks is of the essence of war.

The 22nd of November was spent in relieving some of the divisions which had suffered most in the battle, and organizing the ground won on our right and right centre. A little after midday the enemy regained Fontaine-notre-Dame, which was commanded not only by the height of Bourlon, but by the positions at La Folie Wood and on the canal towards Cambrai. That night the 36th (Ulster) and the 56th Division of London Territorials were engaged in the Mœuvres area, and a battalion of the Queen's Westminsters from the latter carried Tadpole Copse, a point in the Siegfried Line west of Mœuvres, which was of value as a flanking position for the attack on Bourlon Wood.

On the morning of the 23rd came the serious assault on the Bourlon heights. The 51st Division attacked Fontaine-notre-Dame, but were repulsed; in the afternoon they tried again, but could not clear the village, though our tanks entered it and remained there till dusk, to the inconvenience of the enemy. Meantime on their left the 40th Division attacked the wood, captured the whole of it, including the highest point of the ridge, and entered Bourlon village. The enemy

here was the 3rd Guards Division, and a counter-attack by all three battalions of the 9th Grenadier Regiment was completely repulsed before evening.

The battle was now concentrated in the Bourlon area, and for some days in that ragged wood, and



around the shells of the two villages, a fierce and bloody strife continued. On the morning of the 24th a counter-attack drove us out of the north-east corner of the wood, but the 14th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of the 51st Division, the dismounted 15th Hussars, and what was left of the 119th Brigade of the 40th Divi-

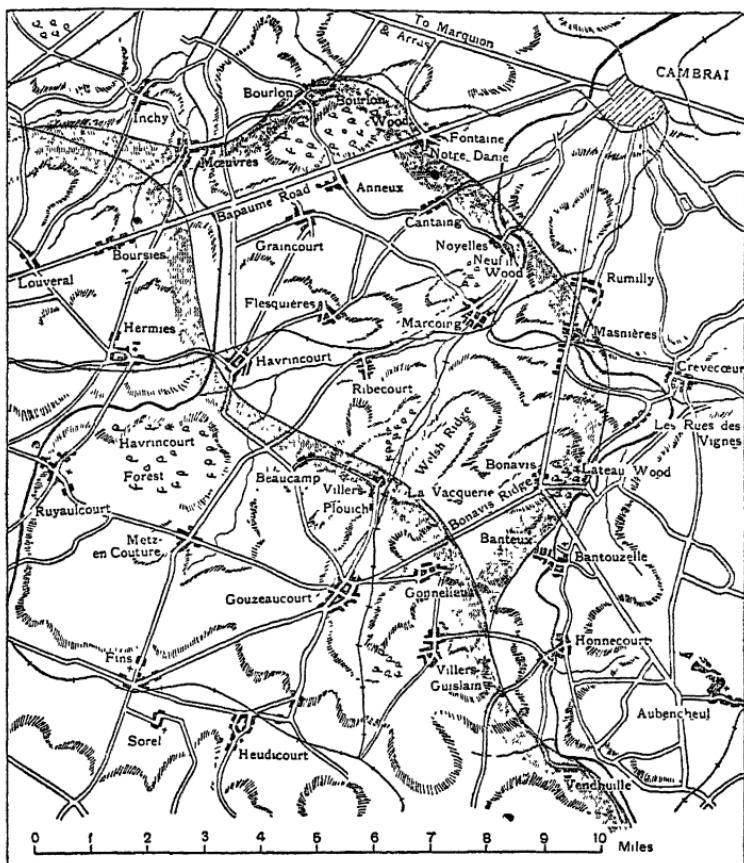
sion, re-established our front. Assaults from the west were also repulsed by dismounted cavalry. That afternoon the 40th Division attacked Bourlon village, and captured the whole of it. All along the line from Tadpole Copse to Fontaine it was clear that the enemy was gaining in strength, and next evening, 25th November, Bourlon village was retaken by the Germans, though part of the 13th East Surreys held out in the south-east corner till they were relieved two days later. The 40th Division, which had had most of the fighting here, was now replaced by the 62nd Division, and the enemy continued to press so hard that on the 26th he had entered the northern skirts of Bourlon Wood.

Our position was now too awkward to be long maintained, and on the 27th we made an effort to secure the whole Bourlon ridge as well as Fontaine-notre-Dame. Two divisions, supported by tanks, were designed for the task—the Guards against Fontaine, and the 62nd on their left against Bourlon. Once more we succeeded in gaining both villages; once again counter-attacks later in the day drove us out of them. We held a strong position on the Bourlon ridge, but we had not yet established it. Accordingly we relieved the divisions which had borne the brunt of the fighting, and set to work to design a final attack which should give us what we sought. Meantime on other parts of the line we had improved our situation. The 12th Division on our right had pushed out towards Banteux, on the Scheldt Canal, and on our left the 16th Division had won ground in the Siegfried Line north-west of Bullecourt. In the week's fighting

we had taken over 10,500 prisoners and 142 guns ; we had carried 14,000 yards of the main Siegfried Line and 10,000 yards of the Reserve Line ; we had wrested more than sixty square miles from the enemy, and retaken ten villages. We now held a salient formed like a rough rectangle, some ten miles wide and six miles deep. It was a salient awkwardly placed, for we had not won either on north or east the positions which would have made it secure, and during that week the enemy, by means of his admirable communications, was hurrying up troops for a counterstroke.

Cambrai had beyond doubt startled the German High Command. They had not dreamed of such an event, and they realized that only by the narrowest margin had they escaped catastrophe. The joy bells which rang prematurely in England woke uneasy thoughts in Germany, and the people for a moment were gravely depressed. It was Ludendorff's business to cheer his countrymen by a dramatic counterstroke ; for, knowing the immense sacrifice he was to demand from the nation in the coming spring, he could not afford to permit any check to their confidence. Accordingly, during the last week of November, sixteen fresh divisions were brought to the battlefield, and on the 29th von der Marwitz issued an order to the Second Army :—

“ The English, by throwing into the fight countless tanks on 20th November, gained a victory near Cambrai. Their intention was to break through ; but they did not succeed, thanks to the brilliant resistance of our troops. We are now going to turn their embryonic victory into a defeat by an encircling counter-attack. The Fatherland is watching you, and expects every man to do his duty.”



Battle of Cambrai.—Map showing the front from which the British attack was made (Nov. 20, 1917), and the greatest extent of ground gained.

The British High Command were aware of this activity; they were even aware that its area extended outside the battleground as far south as Vendhuille; and they took measures to prepare for the worst. In the area between Mœuvres and Can-

taing they had two fresh divisions—the 47th London Territorials and the 2nd, and one—the 56th—which had been only partially engaged. On the ten miles between Cantaing and the ravine at Banteux lay five divisions—the 62nd, 6th, 29th, 20th, and 12th—all of which had been previously in action, and were more or less weary. South of Banteux our line was very weak ; but there the 55th Division held a front which had been in our possession for months, and consequently its defence was well organized. Moreover, our hold on the Bonavis ridge increased the security of the line between Banteux and Vendhuille. In immediate reserve were the Guards and the 2nd Cavalry Division, and in general support the 48th (South Midland) Division, and the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions. It seemed certain that, since our hold on Bourlon ridge was so insecure, and the place meant so much to the enemy, the chief weight of any counterstroke would fall there, and in that area, as events showed, we were well prepared. Everywhere on our front the warning was given, and especial precautions were taken on that bit of our old line between Villers Guislain and Vendhuille. “Troops were warned to expect an attack, additional machine guns were placed to secure supporting points, and divisional reserves were closed up. Special patrols were also sent out to watch for signs of any hostile advance.”

Nevertheless, the enemy secured a tactical surprise. His plan—it was framed by Ludendorff himself—was to strike hard on our two flanks, and then to press in the centre. On his right he hoped to win the line Flesquières-Havrincourt, and on his left the line Ribecourt-Trescault-Beaucamp-Gouzeaucourt,

and so nip off all the British troops in the front of the salient. Twenty-four divisions, the bulk of them fresh, were used for the attempt. He used also his new tactics, designed on the Eastern front and first practised at Caporetto ; and these tactics meant surprise.

At 7.30 a.m. on the morning of Friday, 30th November, a storm of gas shells broke out on the ten miles between Masnières and Vendhuille. There was no steadily advancing Nov. 30. barrage to warn us of the approach of the enemy's infantry, and the thick morning mist enabled him to reach our trenches when our men were still under cover. The result was that from the north end of the Bonavis ridge to Gonnelleiu, and from Gonnelieu to Vendhuille, our line was overwhelmed. At once the enemy was on the edge of La Vacquerie, and pressing up the deep ravine between Villers Guislain and Gonnelieu. Isolated British detachments in advantageous positions offered a gallant resistance. Such were the parties at Lateau Wood and south-east of La Vacquerie ; such were the 92nd Field Artillery Brigade north-east of La Vacquerie : the troops on the high ground east of Villers Guislain : and south of that village the garrison of Royal Lancasters and Liverpools at Limerick Post. But the advance could not be stayed. The batteries at La Vacquerie were taken—the first British guns to be lost since Second Ypres—and at 9 a.m. the enemy was in Gouzeaucourt.

The situation was grave indeed, for our position in the front of the salient was turned in flank and rear. It was saved by the 29th Division at Masnières. That gallant body—made up of English,

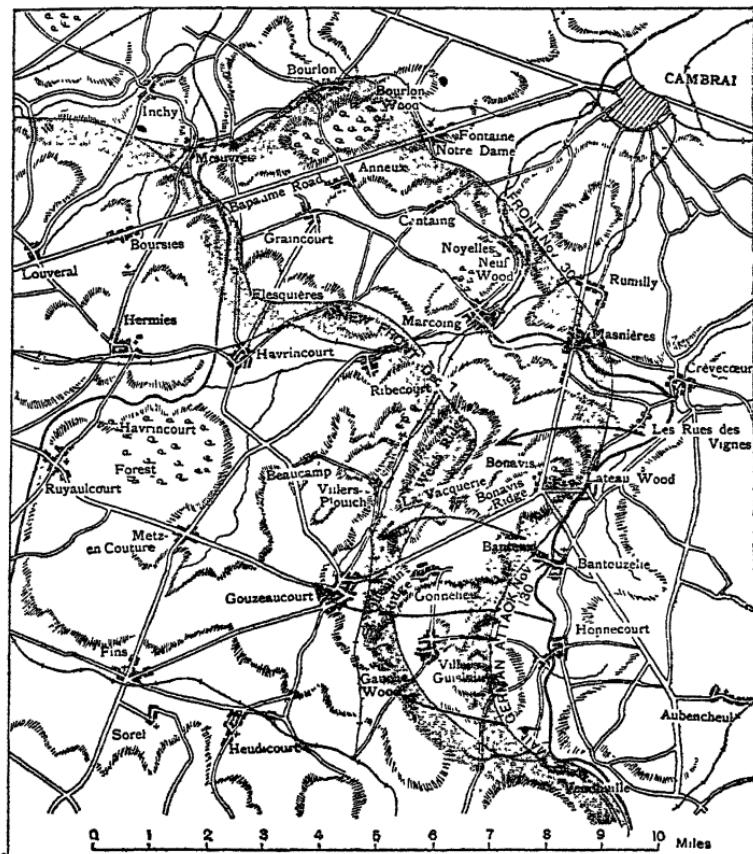
Scottish, Welsh, Irish; Guernsey, and Newfoundland battalions—had by its exploits at Gallipoli and on the Somme won a reputation second to none in the British Army. This day it gained still higher renown. Though the enemy, covering it on flank and rear, overran its divisional and brigade headquarters, and took its batteries in reverse, it did not yield its ground. Swinging back its right to form a defensive flank, it clung to Masnières and beat off all attacks. Its heroic resistance defeated the German plan of a frontal assault, and gave Sir Julian Byng time to attend to his broken right wing.

At midday the Guards came into action west of Gouzeaucourt, with the 5th Cavalry Division filling the gap on their right towards Villers Guislain. Gouzeaucourt was retaken, and for the rest of the day there was a fierce struggle on the St. Quentin ridge and at Gauche Wood, east of the village. There every kind of unit was engaged—three battalions of tanks, a field artillery brigade of the 47th Division, a detachment of the 29th Division, and a company of North Midland sappers. By the evening they had found touch with the garrison of La Vacquerie, who in turn were linked up with the defenders of Masnières, and our line was reconstituted.

Meantime, the greater part of the enemy force had hurled itself against the front between Mœuvres and the Scheldt Canal, held by the 56th, 2nd, and 47th Divisions. These three divisions, one of old Regulars and two of London Territorials, were forewarned of the attack by a severe preliminary bombardment followed by a barrage. A little after 9 a.m. the German infantry came on in wave after wave, so that as many as eleven waves advanced in one

## THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI. 117

area during the day. The fiercest thrust was west of Bourlon Wood. There a company of the 17th



Battle of Cambrai.—The German Counter-attack on November 30, and the British Retirement.

Royal Fusiliers of the 2nd Division was in course of being withdrawn from an exposed position when the storm burst on it. Captain Stone "sent

three of his platoons back, and with a rearguard, composed of the remainder of his company, held off the enemy's infantry until the main position had been organized. Having faithfully accomplished their task, this rearguard died fighting to the end with their faces to 'the enemy.' The day was starred with heroic deeds. Between Mœuvres and the Canal du Nord a company of the 13th Essex of the 2nd Division found itself isolated. "After maintaining a splendid and successful resistance throughout the day, whereby the pressure upon our main line was greatly relieved, at 4 p.m. this company held a council of war, at which the two remaining company officers (Lieutenant J. D. Robinson and Second-Lieutenant E. L. Corps), the company sergeant-major, and the platoon sergeants were present, and unanimously determined to fight to the last, and have 'no surrender.' Two runners who were sent to notify this decision to battalion headquarters succeeded in getting through to our lines, and delivered their message. During the remainder of the afternoon and far into the following night this gallant company were heard fighting, and there is little room for doubt that they carried out to a man their heroic resolution." So, too, when three posts held by the 1st Royal Berkshires of the 2nd Division were overwhelmed. "When, two days later, the three posts were regained, such a heap of German dead lay in and around them that the bodies of our own men were hidden." So, too, when on the right of the 47th Division a gap was found between the 1/5 and 1/15 battalions of the London Regiment, the two battalion commanders counter-attacked with every man they

could lay their hands on—cooks, orderlies, runners, and signallers—and restored the position. Before such soldierly resolution the German waves broke and ebbed, leaving immense numbers of dead, and by the evening the assault had most signally failed.

But the battle was not over. On 1st December the Guards advanced, captured the St. Quentin ridge and entered Gonnelleiu, taking several hundred prisoners and many machine guns. Farther south, with the help of tanks and the dismounted Ambala brigade of Indian cavalry, they took Gauche Wood, but failed to enter Villers Guislain. There was heavy fighting also at Bourlon and Marcoing, and the 29th Division at Masnières beat off no less than nine attacks. But the Masnières position, with the Bonavis ridge in the enemy's hands, was now precarious, and that night the 29th Division withdrew to a line west of the village. Next day there was a further withdrawal. The enemy pressed up Welsh Ridge, north-east of La Vacquerie, and won ground north and west of Gonnelleiu. On the 3rd he took La Vacquerie, and since our position beyond the Scheldt Canal near Marcoing was now becoming an acute salient, our troops were brought to the west bank of the canal.

Little happened for the next two days but local fighting; but it was clear to Sir Douglas Haig that, although the enemy's impetus seemed to be exhausted, the British front was in a highly unsatisfactory state. Either we must regain the Bonavis ridge, which meant a new and severe engagement for which we had not the troops, or we must draw in our line to the Flesquières ridge. He had no

other course before him but to give up the Bourlon position for which his troops had so gallantly fought.

*Dec. 4-7.* The shortening of the line was begun on the night of the 4th and completed by the morning of the 7th. The operation was achieved no less skilfully than the similar drawing in of the Ypres front in May 1915. The new front, which in its northern part corresponded roughly to the old Siegfried Reserve Line, ran from the Canal du Nord one and a half miles north of Havrincourt, north of Flesquieres and Ribecourt, and along Welsh Ridge to a point one and a half miles north by east of La Vacquerie. South of that it ran west of Gonnelleau and Villers Guislain, rejoining our old front at Vendhuille. For some days there was local fighting at Bullecourt, but the battle was over, and by the end of the year the Cambrai front had returned to the normal winter inactivity.

The main criticism on this singular action has been already alluded to—that it should never have been undertaken, since it would inevitably involve an extension of operations for which we had not adequate strength. A secondary criticism is that it should have been broken off on 22nd November, when the forty-eight hours of grace had passed and we had not secured our most vital objectives. The replies to both arguments have been suggested in the preceding pages. Viewed in the light of the central strategy of the war, Cambrai effected nothing. It was a brilliant feat of arms, which reflected great credit on the British troops and their commanders, but it had no real bearing upon the fortunes of either combatant. It did not weaken the

enemy in his positions, for we had to surrender Bourlon ; it did not weaken him in *personnel*, for the losses were probably about the same on both sides ; nor in *moral*, for he retrieved his first disaster. Looked at solely as a feat of arms, the honours were, perhaps, with Sir Julian Byng, for on a balance the British retained sixteen square miles of enemy territory, while the Germans on 30th November won only seven miles of British, and our sixteen included a seven-mile stretch of the Siegfried Line. It is difficult to see that the British Commander-in-Chief could have acted otherwise than he did. He took a legitimate risk. Had he succeeded, his bold strategy would have been lauded to the skies, and he cannot be blamed because he just fell short of the purpose he had set himself. One good result was indisputable. Enemy divisions destined for the Italian front were diverted to Cambrai, and at a most critical period in the stand on the Piave the German concentration against Italy was suspended for at least a fortnight.

Had Sir Douglas Haig succeeded to the full, it is not likely that his success would have had any lasting influence on the campaign, for he had not the strength to follow it up. But there was that in the German counterstroke the full understanding of which, had it been possible for our General Staff, might have had a potent influence on the future. The attack of the enemy right on Bourlon was in the traditional German manner, reminding those who had served in the autumn of 1914 of the methods of First Ypres. There was the heavy initial bombardment, and then wave after wave of massed infantry. But it was different on his left between

Masnières and Vendhuille. It was believed in Britain at the time that there had been some defect in our intelligence system which should have prevented a surprise, but it is clear from Sir Douglas Haig's account that there was no such defect. We had all the knowledge of the enemy attack which any intelligence corps could give. Nor were we deficient in artillery, nor greatly outnumbered, for the enemy superiority was not more than four to three. Nevertheless it was a surprise, for a system was being tested which had not yet been tried upon a British force. It was the new system which Ludendorff had evolved on the Eastern front, and which the Allied Staffs had not yet mastered—the tactics of Riga, of Caporetto. The lesson was missed ; but four months later the armies of France and Britain were to read it in letters of fire.

With Cambrai closed the campaign of 1917 on the Western front, save that the guns were still growling on the Piave, though there the worst crisis had passed. It had been a year of hard fighting for both France and Britain. The former, after the bitter disappointment of the early days of the Second Battle of the Aisne, had hewn her way patiently to success, till she had cleared the Aisne heights, and won back all but a mile or two of the sacred Verdun soil. Britain had had the harder task and the more continuous fighting. From the first days of January, when the enemy began to retreat from the Somme uplands, to the middle of December, when Cambrai died down, her forces had been scarcely a week out of battle. Arras, Messines, Third Ypres, and Cambrai were actions as great as

any in the history of British arms. We had taken more than 125,000 prisoners ; we had wrested from the enemy every single piece of dominating ground between the Oise and the North Sea. It had been a year of successes, signal and yet indeterminate. The Germans had fallen back upon new positions prepared by the labour of prisoners, and in these masterpieces of field fortification were able to abide. The policy of the Somme—a perfectly sound and final policy provided the war continued on two fronts—we now saw to be out of date. The war had concentrated on one front, the Western. We could not hope to wear our opponents thin by the method of “ limited objectives,” and then break them, for they had found a new reservoir of supply.

The dominant fact at the close of 1917 was that the enemy was able to resume the offensive at will. He had now some 150 divisions in the West and 79 in the East, for though he had brought westward 23 divisions since 1st October, he had the habit of returning eastward certain worn-out units. But the men he was bringing from Russia were the cream of his manhood, and the business of forming and training new shock-battalions went busily on. Moreover, he was far from having exhausted that source of supply, and presently he could add another half million of men and an infinity of guns to his Western strength. The long German defensive, which had lasted since Verdun, was at an end. Young soldiers and irresponsible civilians professed to welcome a German assault ; but wise men were uneasy. They knew that the German Staff would presently make a desperate effort to secure a decision before Russia could recover from her maladies

and ere America was ready. The German defence had been conducted in a long-prepared fortified zone ; our successes had given us a new line, often only a few weeks old, and we had not the German assiduity in field work ; how, it was asked, would we fare against a resolute offensive ? Again, we were deplorably short of men. Sir Douglas Haig had never received during 1917 the minimum levies he had asked for, and had been compelled to put into the line of battle men imperfectly trained, and to strain good divisions to the breaking-point. Too little was being done at home to raise fresh forces. The anomaly of Ireland remained ; the vigorous "comb-out" of non-essential industries, so often promised, had not yet been undertaken.

The mind of Britain was exercised with a military problem which even the dullest felt to be growing urgent. In a subsequent chapter we shall examine its reaction upon our political life in the discussions as to a unified War Staff for all the Allies, and the appointment of a Generalissimo. The steps taken with regard to the former were timid, but, so far as they went, useful. The latter question, to which only one answer could be given by thoughtful men, was obscured by a fog of false sentiment and misplaced national pride. The British people, willing to do all that was asked of them, received no clear word of leading either from the embarrassed and somewhat obscure pleas of the soldier or the convenient rhetoric of the politician. To the observer, familiar with his countrymen, it was apparent that no drastic remedy would be adopted except under the goad of an immense disaster.

## CHAPTER CXLIX.

### THE CONQUEST OF EAST AFRICA.

The Position in 1915—The Work of the Original British Contingent—Germany and her Colonies—Mittel-Afrika—The German East African Forces—General von Lettow-Vorbeck—His Methods of Supply—Blockade-running—Nature of Terrain—Climate and Diseases—General Smuts—His New Levies—His Plan of Campaign—The Gap of Kilimanjaro—The Tanga Railway reached—Conquest of Kilimanjaro—Redistribution of British Army—Van Deventer's March on Kondoa Irangi—The Advance down the Pangani—Capture of Handeni—The Camp on the Msisha—Occupation of Tanga and Bagamoyo—Van Deventer reaches the Central Railway—The Fight for the Nguru Hills—Capture of Morogoro—Occupation of Dar-es-Salaam and Kilossa—Fall of Tabora—The Rufiji crossed—General Smuts goes to England—The Rufiji Delta cleared—Naumann's Raid—The Belgians occupy Mahenge—Von Lettow crosses the Rovuma—Nature of the British Achievement—General Smuts's Work—Endurance of the Troops.

THE close of 1917 saw what had once been the colony of German East Africa wholly in British hands, though fighting still continued inside the marches of Mozambique. The story of the campaign which produced this result deserves to be studied in the closest detail, both for its masterly strategy, its picturesque interest, and its superb record of human endurance. In a work such as this it can be treated only on broad lines, for it was no more than an episode in the great struggle of

the nations. But even the barest sketch will reveal the extraordinary difficulties of the campaigning and the magnitude of the performance alike of conquerors and conquered.

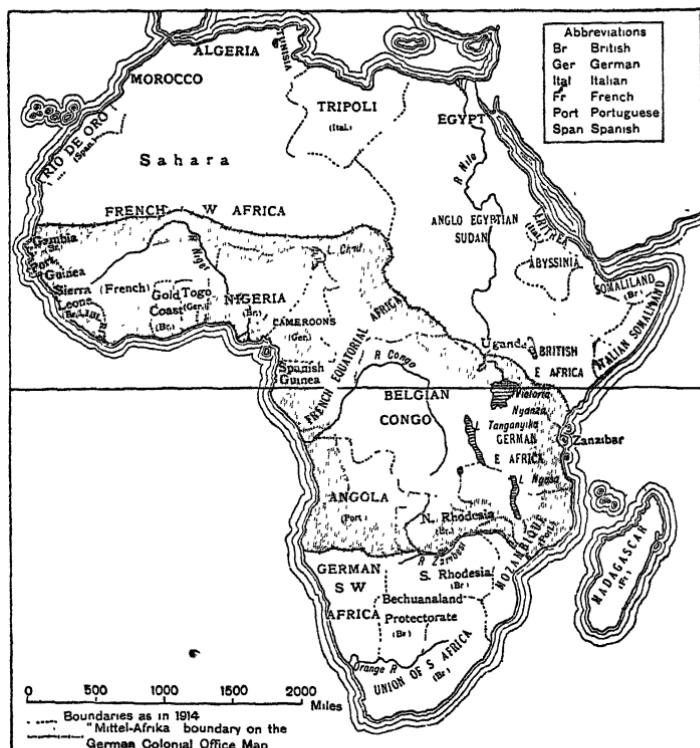
We left the narrative in the early days of 1915, when the slender British forces were definitely on the defensive. The Germans in East Africa were like the Germans in Europe, with enemies on all sides and blockaded by sea ; but the enemies were little more than a handful, and the encirclement was futile. Operating on interior lines, and with communications immensely superior to those of his opponents, the problem of von Lettow-Vorbeck was at the start an easy one. The main British forces had been drawn chiefly from India. There were one regular British infantry battalion—the Loyal North Lancashires—a number of battalions of the King's African Rifles, contingents from South Africa, and various irregular units, mounted and unmounted, raised among the settlers. The little army was starved of men, for it was the British policy that, as far as possible, no troops should be used in East Africa which could be employed in the main theatre in Europe.

In November 1914, as we have seen, General Aitken had failed signally at Tanga. In January 1915 came a second British defeat at Jassin. In April of that year Major-General Tighe became Commander-in-Chief, but he had not the strength to begin serious offensive operations. During 1915 there were a number of minor engagements, chiefly on the Uganda side and in the south-west, where a small force was at work on the Rhodesia frontier, while Belgian troops were also busy on the Congo

border. But at the beginning of 1916 the honours lay clearly with the Germans. They had their colony intact, as Governor von Schnee proudly proclaimed ; and they believed that, since they were self-supporting, they could resist any reinforcements which the British could bring. Tropical Africa was their main defence ; climate and distance, swamps and mountains, were better safeguards than numbers and munitions. And they had cause for their confidence, for they had boldly kept the initiative. They were for ever raiding the Uganda and the Voi-Maktau railways, and in the gap of Kilimanjaro, the main gate of the north, they held Taveta and the line of the Lumi River inside British territory.

In considering the remarkable achievements of General Smuts and his South African contingents, we must not forget the long, heart-breaking struggle of the troops, white and coloured, who held the fort till February 1916. For eighteen months they had borne the heat and burden of the climate, without chance of leave, without adequate supplies, with little to cheer them in their past record, and with no hope of an offensive in the future. One white officer, often in the early twenties, with a handful of natives was left to patrol a long length of line in the face of vigilant and aggressive enemies. In that wide and solitary land there was none of the stimulus which comes from a consciousness of supports at call and neighbours near. The time was soon to come when the little army was caught up in a great movement, and swept the enemy's domain from all points of the compass. But let us recognize the desperate strain on mind and body

of the far-flung lines of defence which during 1915 sat in dreary and perilous vigil on the northern borders.



Africa, showing (by the shaded boundary) the region included in the German Colonial Office Map of Mittel-Afrika (Berlin, 1917).

At the beginning of 1916 East Africa was the only colony left to Germany. She had lost successively Togoland, South-West Africa, and the

Cameroons, and she was the more determined to cling to her richest possession. She hoped by her victories over the Allies in Europe to be able to dictate terms as to Africa, and her terms were not less than a German domination from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, embracing British and German East Africa, the Belgian and French Congo, Angola, the Cameroons, Nigeria, and all West Africa to Cape Verde. Mittel-Afrika had taken as definite a shape as Mittel-Europa. She wished it strategically as a flank guard for her conquests in the Near East ; she wished it as a controlled producing ground of those raw materials which were disturbing the minds of her economists ; she wished it as a recruiting ground for an army of a million men, trained in the German fashion, which would terrorize the unwarlike peoples of the few African territories that remained to other Powers. Herr Emil Zimmermann dreamed of a day when Mittel-Afrika would have a population of fifty million natives and half a million Germans ; when great cities would have sprung up on Chad and Tanganyika and the Congo ; and when the Lake Chad express, carrying a freight of German bagmen, would run regularly from Berlin. The Emperor had ordered his people in Africa to hold out to the last ; and, with such a dream before them, it was their business to yield nothing till the final victory in Europe should gain everything.\*

\* The German views on Africa will be found set out in General Smuts's address to the Royal Geographical Society (*Geographical Journal*, March 1918) ; in Emil Zimmermann's *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich Mittel-Afrika als Grundlage einer neuen Deutschen Weltpolitik* (1917), translated into English

The German general, von Lettow-Vorbeck, was an officer of the General Staff, who had once been Chief of Staff in the Posen district. He came to Africa in the spring of 1914, and set himself at once to develop the local levies. For his native troops he drew upon the best fighting races of Africa—Sudanese, Somalis, Zulus, and Wanyamwezi. He was a specialist in machine guns, and he saw the advantage of that weapon for bush fighting. His men were immune against tropical diseases ; they knew the tangled country like their own hand ; and his transport, being entirely by porters, was not incommodeed by the bad roads. Moreover, like most of his countrymen, he had no conscience as to the treatment of natives, and could enforce discipline by the lash and the chain. His chief difficulty was likely to be shortage of arms and ammunition, for the large stock with which he began the war was bound to be depleted. He was fortunate, however, in receiving various unexpected windfalls. When the *Koenigsberg* was destroyed by our warships in the Rufiji River in July 1915, her guns were saved and moved up country. We proclaimed a blockade of the coast on February 28, 1915 ; but three ships managed to get through—the *Adjutant* to Dar-es-Salaam in February 1915, the *Rubens* from Hamburg to Mansa Bay in April 1915, and the *Maria* to Sudi Bay in March 1916. Ammunition was also manufactured in local workshops, as were other supplies—such as benzine, paraffin, leather,

by Edwyn Bevan, 1918 ; in Dr. Solf's article in the *Colonial Calendar* for 1917, and in his numerous speeches ; and in the article by Delbrück in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* for February 1917.

rubber, and quinine. All the resources of a rich colony were adapted to the business of war. It is difficult to overpraise the vigour and adaptability of the German effort, and in von Lettow the colony had a commander of infinite resource, courage, and persistence. Before the arrival of General Smuts he disposed in the field of a force larger and better equipped than the thin lines of the besiegers; and even after the arrival of the South African contingents he had an army scarcely inferior to ours in effectives, better adapted for tropical warfare, and with a far simpler problem before it.

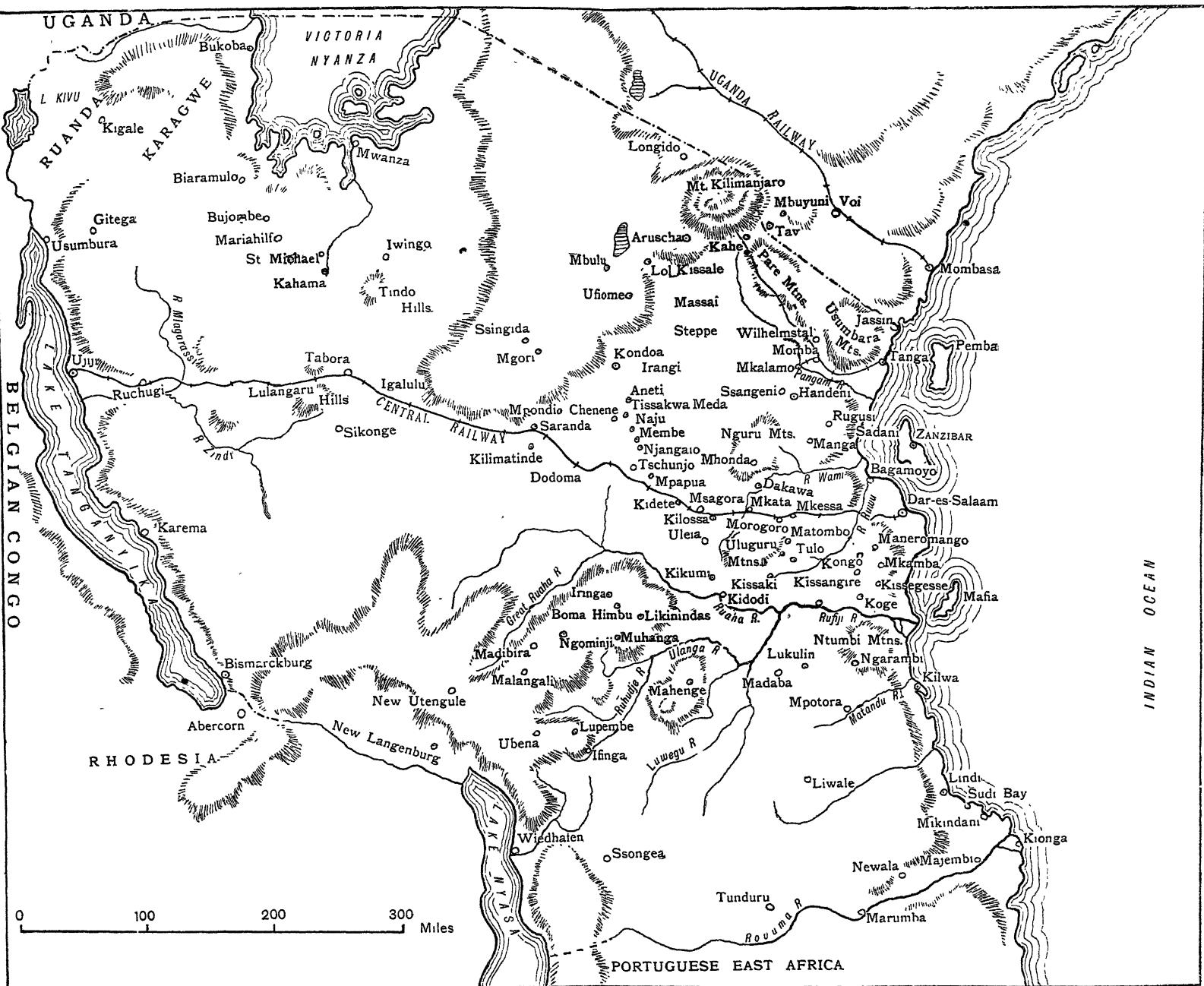
It was the first time in history that a British army had in a tropical wilderness encountered an enemy force officered by highly-trained Europeans. The combination meant that every advantage of terrain and climate would be most cunningly used against us. Since our aim was to conquer the country and expel the enemy or compel him to surrender, our offensive involved interminable marches in areas most unsuitable for a force with wheeled transport moving far from its base. In extent the colony was as large as Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, and Denmark taken together. The coast line on the Indian Ocean was 470 miles long, the western frontier from Lake Victoria to Lake Nyasa some 700 miles, and from Dar-es-Salaam on the east to the terminus of the Central Railway at Tanganyika on the west the distance was 787 miles. The land rose in tiers from the eastern coastal plain to a plateau which broke down steeply towards the trough of the Central Lakes. In the north the frontier with British East Africa was for the most part a chain of mountains, the

Usambara and Pare ranges culminating in the great *massif* of Kilimanjaro. The western border, between the lakes, was also mountainous; so difficult that the Belgian force could not invade enemy territory direct from the Congo, but had to be moved north-east round the volcanic ranges to Uganda before they could find a starting-point. In the south-west a mountain range closed the gap between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa, and blocked the advance from North-Eastern Rhodesia. More notable still, a chain of ranges—the Nguru, Ulu-guru, and Mtumba mountains—lay from north to south on the edge of the plateau and the coastal plain, and so formed a series of rallying points for the enemy's defence. Two railways ran from east to west—those from Tanga to Moschi, and from Dar-es-Salaam to Tanganyika. We had but one sea base—Mombasa—and everything for the critical northern front had to be landed there.

The struggle, wrote General Smuts, was largely a “campaign against Nature, in which climate, geography, and disease fought more effectively against us than the well-trained forces of the enemy.” Of the nature of the campaign he has also written :—

“ It is impossible for those unacquainted with German East Africa to realize the physical, transport, and supply difficulties of the advance over this magnificent country of unrivalled scenery and fertility, consisting of great mountain systems alternating with huge plains; with a great rainfall and wide unbridged rivers in the regions of all the mountains, and insufficient surface water on the plains for the needs of an army; with magnificent bush and primeval forest everywhere, pathless, trackless, except for the spoor of the elephant or the narrow footpath of the natives; the malarial mosquito everywhere except on the highest plateaux; everywhere belts





German East Africa.



infested with the deadly tsetse fly, which makes an end of all animal transport ; the ground almost everywhere a rich black or red cotton soil, which any transport converts into mud in the rain or dust in the drought. In the rainy seasons, which occupy about half the year, much of the country becomes a swamp, and military movements become impracticable. And everywhere the fierce heat of equatorial Africa, accompanied by a wild luxuriance of parasitic life, breeding tropical diseases in the unacclimatized whites. These conditions make life for the white man in that country far from a pleasure trip : if, in addition, he has to make long marches on short rations, the trial becomes very severe ; if, above all, huge masses of men and material have to be moved over hundreds of miles in a great military expedition against a mobile and alert foe, the strain becomes unendurable. And the chapter of accidents in this region of the unknown ! Unseasonable rains cut off expeditions for weeks from their supply bases ; animals died by the thousand after passing through an unknown fly belt ; mechanical transport got bogged in the marshes, held up by bridges washed away or mountain passes demolished by sudden floods. And the gallant boys marching far ahead under the pitiless African sun, with the fever raging in their blood, pressed ever on after the retreating enemy, often on much-reduced rations and without any of the small comforts which in this region are real necessities. In the story of human endurance the campaign deserves a very special place ; and the heroes who went through it uncomplainingly, doggedly, are entitled to all recognition and reverence. Their Commander-in-Chief will remain eternally proud of them."

In the autumn of 1915 Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, the former commander of the British Second Army in Flanders, had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces in East Africa. Accompanied by a large staff, he sailed for the Cape ; but there persistent ill-health compelled him to return to England. At the beginning of 1916 General Smuts was appointed in his place, and on 19th February he arrived at Mombasa. As we have seen in an earlier volume, General Smuts had conducted brilliantly

the southern operations in the German South-West African campaign, and he had since held the portfolio of Defence in the Union Government. In the South African War of 1899-1902 he had been one of the most mobile and successful of the Boer generals. As he put it whimsically : " I believe it is generally admitted that in the Boer War I covered more country than any other commander in the field on either side—and my movement was not always in the direction of the enemy ! " He had now to face the reverse problem—how to bring to book an evasive and swiftly-moving enemy in a country compared with which the High Veld was a parterre.

Large contingents had been raised in South Africa, some of which had already arrived on the battleground. There were two formed divisions in the country, apart from the troops on the lakes and the Rhodesia and Nyassaland forces—the 1st Division, under General Stewart, at Longido ; and the 2nd Division, under General Tighe, on the Voi-Maktau line. The enemy strength was estimated at 16,000 men, of whom 2,000 were white—a number slightly less than the army which General Smuts now commanded—and its main force was concentrated in the Kilimanjaro region to bar the gates of the north. But since von Lettow had behind him the Tanga Railway and the good roads connecting it with the Central Railway, he was in a position to move troops with speed to the coastal plain, should a landing be threatened there.

General Smuts's first task was to decide upon a plan of campaign. Since Britain controlled the sea,

it seemed the natural course to force a landing at Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam, and move into the interior along the railway lines. Such a course would give us at once much shorter communications with our bases at Durban and Cape Town, and would enable us to advance to the tableland by the valleys of the many east-flowing rivers. This was undoubtedly the plan which the enemy expected us to adopt, but he had to reckon with a master of the unexpected. General Smuts decided to "drive" the country from north to south, while his subsidiary forces, British and Belgian, moved eastward from Lake Victoria, from Lake Kivu, from Tanganyika and Nyasa. It was a plan which at first sight seemed to verge on the impossible. In moving south he had to force the gap of Kilimanjaro, where the Germans were strongly entrenched ; he had to cross many rivers and lateral valleys ; he had to face three knots of difficult mountain-land ; above all, till he won the Tanga Railway, he must have one single precarious line of communication through Voi and Maktau. More : even with the Tanga Railway, even with the Central Railway in his hands, his position would not be easy, for the enemy might be expected so to destroy these lines that they would take months to repair. Indeed, he could look for no certain additional communications till he found them by water on the Rufiji.

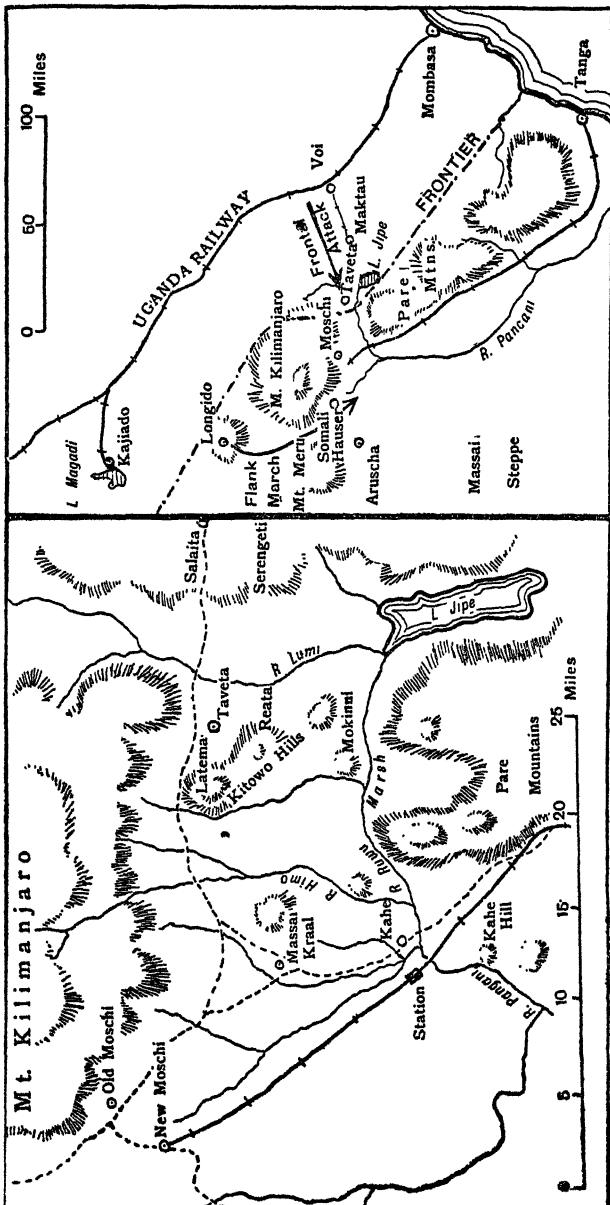
But General Smuts had good reason for his decision. His main forces were massed on the northern front, and there was no time before the rains came to alter General Tighe's dispositions. He knew, too, the deadly climate, and he did not wish to subject his men to the fevers of the coastal plain

with the rains due in a month's time. So far as possible he hoped to fight on the high lands, or at any rate to have uplands adjacent for rest camps and hospitals. Again, he wished to split the enemy country, as Sherman split the Confederacy by his march through Georgia. If his main force took the central road from north to south, and subsidiary armies pressed in from the west, and in due course detachments landed on the coast and pushed westward, the enemy would be caught, not between two but between a multitude of fires. He knew the difficulty of rounding up a mobile force and clearing a savage country, and he was well aware that it could not be achieved by a stately progress against a fully warned enemy. He wanted a surprise, a series of surprises, for no Fabian strategy could effect his purpose. Therefore he adopted a plan which von Lettow had not dreamed of, and flung himself into the wilds, trusting to good fortune to pick up new communications as he proceeded. It was a plan only possible for a commander who had implicit faith in himself and in his men. "I am sure," he wrote, "it was not possible to conduct the campaign successfully in any other way. Hesitation to take risks, slower moves, closer inspection of the auspices, would only have meant the same disappearance of my men from fever and other tropical diseases, without any corresponding compensation to show in the defeat of the enemy and the occupation of his country."

The first step was to force the passage between the flanks of Kilimanjaro and the Pare mountains. Before his arrival General Tighe had done good work in the way of preparation. The 1st Division

had occupied Longido and linked it up with the railhead at Lake Magadi, and the 2nd Division had taken Serengeti. The railway from Voi was slowly creeping forward from Maktau. After a careful reconnaissance General Smuts resolved to attack at once, in order to achieve his purpose before the heavy rains began in the end of March. Across the mouth of the gap, between Kilimanjaro and the Pare Mountains, ran the river Lumi, joining the Ruwu, which flowed from Lake Jipe along the northern base of the Pare. On this line the enemy held an apparently impregnable position. Clearly there was no way of turning it on the south, for the Pare cliffs rose sheer from the river. General Smuts's plan was to direct the 1st Division, under General Stewart, from Longido across thirty-five miles of waterless bush to the gap between Meru and Kilimanjaro, and thence to the place called Somali Hauser, west of Moschi. They were then to move south-east to Kahe, on the Tanga Railway, in the hope of cutting off the retreat of the enemy in the gap. The 2nd Division, under General Tighe, was to attack in front towards Taveta, assisted on the right by the 1st South African Mounted Brigade, under General Van Deventer.

The 1st Division started at dusk on 5th March, Van Deventer moved out by night on the 7th, and the 2nd Division advanced at dawn on Mar. 5-8, the 8th. After a sharp fight at Salaita hill, the Lumi was crossed and Taveta reached on the 10th. The enemy made a stand in the pass of the Kitovo hills between Latema and Reata, and after a long struggle was driven out by the 2nd Division on the Mar. 10. 1916.



**The Forcing of the Kilimanjaro Gap.**

**The Kilimanjaro Gap.**

Sketch showing relation of the Gap to the frontier region.

night of the 11th. On the 12th Van Deventer, moving on the skirts of Kilimanjaro, crossed the Himo River, and on the 13th reached New Moschi, the railway terminus. On Mar. 11–  
the 15th he was in Old Moschi, higher <sup>15.</sup> up in the hills. On the 14th the 1st Division reached New Moschi, while the 2nd Division held a line from the Latema Pass to the Himo. The enemy position in the gap had been turned, and he was retreating towards the Ruwu and the Tanga Railway.

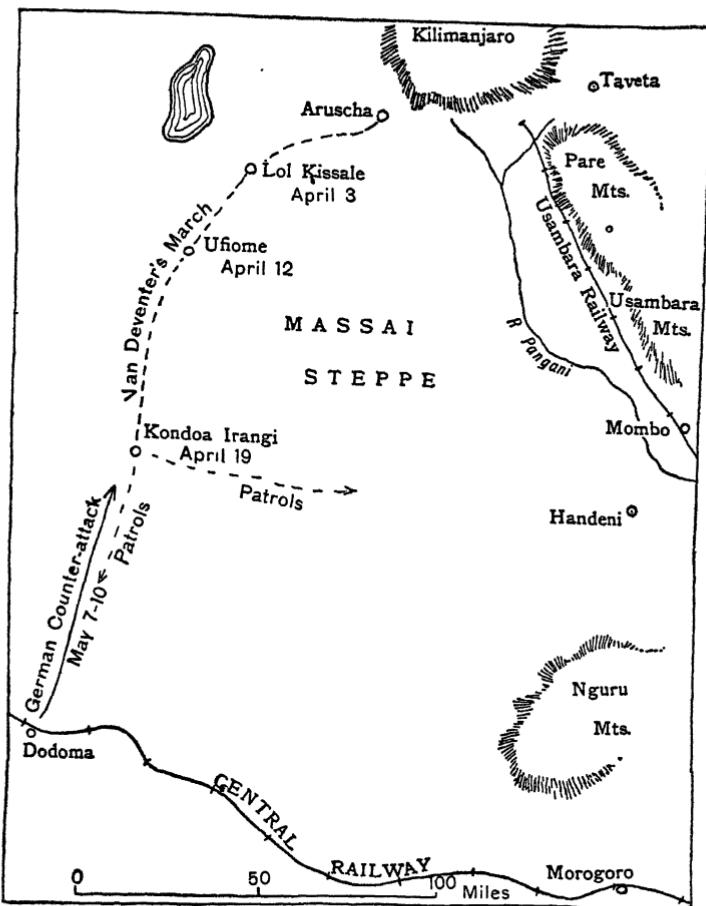
The next step was to secure the Ruwu crossings, and to do it in time to intercept the retreat of his main body ; but there was much difficult broken country between us and the river. Van Deventer was ordered to march by night and cross the Pangani south of Kahe station, so as to get in rear of the enemy's position, while the 1st Division advanced direct on the Ruwu. By daylight on the 21st Van Deventer was fording the Pangani, and Mar. 21.  
presently had seized Kahe hill. He then occupied the station, while the enemy blew up the railway bridge. This cut off von Lettow's retreat by the railway west of the Pare range, and the only hope for the Germans on the Ruwu was the Lake Jipe route east of the mountains. If the 1st Division, now under General Sheppard, could but ford the Ruwu in time, a comprehensive disaster would follow. At 11.30 a.m. on the 21st Sheppard was pressing forward ; but the Germans fought stubborn rearguard actions, and in the thick bush progress was slow. That night the enemy slipped across the Ruwu, and so saved his retirement by Lake Jipe. On the same day, the 21st, Aruscha, fifty miles west

of Moschi, was occupied by a party of Van Deventer's scouts. The pass had been forced, the whole area north of the Ruwu was cleared, and a base in enemy country had been won before the rains for the next move forward. The great mountain, whose chief peak bore the name of the German Emperor, was in our hands. The Commander-in-Chief moved his headquarters to Moschi, and prepared for the second stage.

It was now the end of March, but still the rains tarried. General Smuts made all possible haste to improve his communications against the wet weather by pushing on the railway from Voi across the Lumi to link up with the Tanga line. He relied mainly on motor transport, and, once the rains began, that would be useless. He effected a complete reorganization of this command, abolishing the old two divisions and disposing his troops in three divisions—two made up wholly of South African contingents, and one containing the Indian and British forces. Under the new arrangement the 1st Division, under Major-General Hoskins, comprised the 1st East African Brigade, under Brigadier-General Sheppard, and the 2nd East African Brigade, under Brigadier-General Hannyngham. The 2nd Division, under Major-General Van Deventer, contained the 1st South African Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier General Manie Botha, and the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General C. A. L. Berrange. The 3rd Division, under Major-General Brits, had the 2nd South African Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier-General Enslin, and the 2nd South African Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General Beves.

This done, the Commander-in-Chief considered his next step. Reviewing the various possibilities, he concluded that the main enemy force had retired into the Pare and Usambara mountains, expecting to be followed. He resolved to disappoint them, and to strike at the unguarded interior. He would send Van Deventer with the 2nd Division straight towards Kondoa Irangi, which would compel von Lettow to weaken his force in the mountains and on the Tanga line, and enable the other two divisions, he hoped, to conquer the ranges. To this decision he was helped by the fact that the coming rainy season would be worst in the mountain area, and that if he moved swiftly south he need not bring operations to a standstill during April and May. Meantime, he arranged that the 2,000 British rifles under Lieutenant-Colonel Adye on Lake Victoria, and the large Belgian forces around Lake Kivu, should begin to press in from the western border.

Van Deventer started from Aruscha on 3rd April, and that night captured the hill and wells of Lol Kissale, thirty-five miles to the south. *April 3.* Starting again on the 8th, his horsemen arrived at Tarangire on the 9th, and at Ufioime on the 12th. He was now more than half-way to his goal, but the rains had begun, and progress was difficult. His horses were greatly exhausted, and it was not till the 17th that touch was found with the main enemy position, four miles north of Kondoa Irangi. At noon on the 19th the place fell. It was a magnificent forced march, involving *April 19.* severe privations and immense fatigue. The incessant rain had made cooking impossible; there had been no rations, and the men had lived



Van Deventer's March towards the Central Railway.

on scraps of meat and meal, and the animals on mealie stalks and grass. The 2nd Division had come to the end of its tether, and Van Deventer had to wait for remounts before he could move.

The most he could do was to push out patrols towards the Central Railway in the south and Handeni in the east. He was cut loose from his base, and had to live on local supplies ; which, fortunately, were plentiful, for the Kondoa Irangi plateau was full of cattle and renowned for its fertility. The capture of the place had seriously discomposed the enemy. Von Lettow moved a force of 4,000 from the Usambara Mountains by way of Mombo, Morogoro, and Dodoma, and on the 7th of May attacked Van Deventer's 3,000 weary troops from the south. By the 10th the attack had been beaten off, and no further serious offensive was attempted by von Lettow during the campaign. Van Deventer's march to Kondoa Irangi was, strategically perhaps, the most significant episode in the campaign, as it was certainly the most picturesque.

A few days later the 1st and 3rd Divisions began their advance down the Tanga Railway, the first force of the rains having slackened and the ground hardened. General Smuts's plan was to move eastward to a point opposite Handeni, and then to swing south against the Central Railway on a line parallel to Van Deventer's. It was essential to move fast, while the enemy was still vainly battling at Kondoa Irangi. There were large German forces in the Pare and Usambara mountains ; but General Smuts hoped to march down the Pangani (which flows twenty miles south of the hills), and to occupy Handeni before reinforcements could reach it from the west and north. It was the boldest kind of plan, for he condemned his main body to move through dense bush with an unfordable river on its right. In that

advance went Sheppard's and Beves's brigades,\* while as flank guards Hannington's brigade of Indian troops moved along the railway just under the hills ; and the 3rd King's African Rifles, under Lieutenant-Colonel Fitzgerald, made a circuit north of the Pare range in order to descend on the railway through the Ngulu gap.

Von Lettow's *askaris* knew the country well, but we had in our service many old Boer and British hunters who had as much bush lore as any native. These men did brilliant work in that difficult descent of the Pangani valley. Fitzgerald started on

*May 18-* 18th May ; Hannington's brigade and the main column on the 22nd. On the

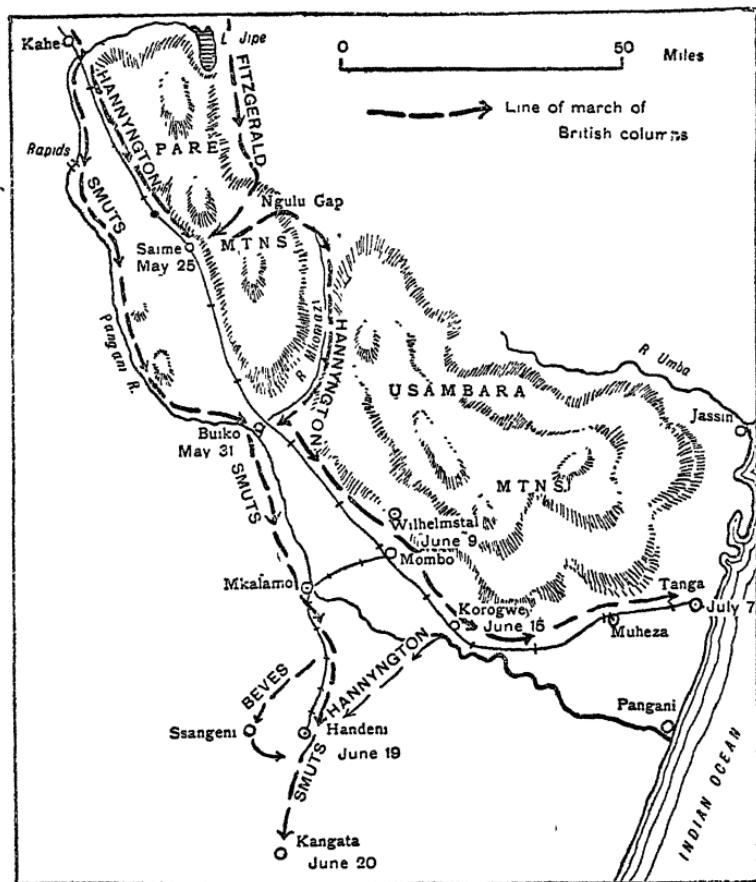
*25.* 25th Hannington had occupied Same station, and next day Fitzgerald joined him through the Ngulu gap. This turned the enemy's first position at Lembini, which was taken by Hoskins

*May 31.* without a blow. On the 31st of May Buiko station, where the Pangani and the railway meet, was occupied, and the enemy was in retreat to Mombo, whence ran a trolley line to Handeni. This made it clear that the Germans were not going to defend the Usambara range, but were retiring by Handeni to the Central Railway. To Hannington was left the task of clearing the near end of those hills, which he did by advancing to Mombo on the 9th of June, occupying Wilhelm-

*June 9-* stal (the summer seat of the German Government) on the 12th, and reaching

*15.* Korogwe on the 15th. The main force had meantime crossed to the right bank of the

\* General Brits, of the 3rd Division, did not arrive till the end of June.



The March down the Pangani.

Pangani. Beves's brigade executed a turning movement towards the west by Ssangeni, while Sheppard's brigade on the 19th entered Handeni itself. Next day he was joined by Hannyngham from Korogwe. In Handeni we had a second strategic base,

parallel to Kondo Irangi, for our advance on the Central Railway ; and now that we held it, the enemy at Kondo was wholly cut off from the north. General Smuts's line of communication was getting very long, for he had not yet opened up another sea base, and rations and comforts were terribly short among his wearied men. But the indefatigable spirit of the Commander-in-Chief was communicated to the army, and he was able to induce them to still further exertions when it seemed that they had already passed the limit of their strength. From a military point of view he was right to press on, for delay might lose him the fruit of his remarkable successes.

*June 20.* On the 20th he moved to Kangata, for he heard that the enemy was in position on the Lukigura River. A column under Hoskins was dispatched in a flanking movement, while Sheppard attacked in front, and on the 24th the

*June 24.* line was won. Here, perforce, a halt must be called. Since 22nd May the troops had marched over 200 miles in desperate country, and the transport system had reached the extreme radius of its capacity. The Nguru range of mountains lay before us, and it appeared that there the enemy was massing in force. Moreover, it was desirable to bring Van Deventer and the 2nd Division farther forward to conform with the advance of the main force, before a combined movement could be undertaken against the Central Railway. Accordingly, a big standing camp was formed on the Msiba River, eight miles beyond the Lukigura, and just under the north-east buttress of the Nguru hills.

The enemy had virtually evacuated the Usam-

bara hills, and on 7th July Tanga was occupied, with the help of the Navy, almost without opposition. Small guerilla bands still hung around the Korogwe neighbourhood ; but during July the country was cleared by an advance from Tanga and Pangani, and by a movement of Hannington from the south. To complete our hold on the north, Sadani Bay was occupied by our Navy on 1st August, and Bagamoyo on the 15th, and the way was thus prepared for the larger advance on Dar-es-Salaam.

On the western marches the Belgians, under General Tombeur, having moved their base from Kibati, north of Lake Kivu, to Bukakate, on Lake Victoria, had occupied Kigali, the capital of the Ruanda province, and the British "Lake detachment" had taken the island of Ukerewe, in Lake Victoria. Sir Charles Crewe was now appointed to the Lake command, and occupied during June the Bukoba and Karagwe districts of Ruanda. On 14th July he compelled the enemy to evacuate Mwanza, his most important town on the lake, and so won a valuable base for a future movement on Tabora. The readiness with which the enemy gave up this area compelled General Smuts to revise his views. He had formerly thought that Tabora would be the goal of von Lettow's retreat ; he now reached the conclusion that it would either be south-eastwards to the Rufiji delta, or south to the Mahenge plateau.

The Msiha camp was an uneasy resting-place. The enemy in the mountains to the south kept up

a persistent shelling, and the troops had to burrow for shelter into the ground. But the halt was of immense advantage, for it enabled weary units to rest, and allowed us to collect reserves of supplies and to receive reinforcements from South Africa of both guns and infantry. Meanwhile Van Deventer

*June 24.* had begun to move on 24th June, in order to come into line with the rest of the army, and to co-operate in reducing the Nguru position. He broke up the enemy's lines south of Kondoa, which had already been weakened by the transference of troops to Nguru. His immediate objective was now the Central Railway; but his advance was so arranged that it should also have a bearing on the Nguru situation, and intercept the main enemy force as they fell back from the hills. On 20th July a column moved westward and occu-

*July 14.* pied Ssingida. On 14th July a column started due south, and after a stiff encounter at Mpondi reached Saranda and Kilimatinde, and so got astride the Central Railway. Van Deventer's main forces advanced to the south-east, the mounted brigade under Manie Botha being diverted on Kikombo, and Berrange's infantry by way of Njangalo upon Dodoma. Njangalo was reached on

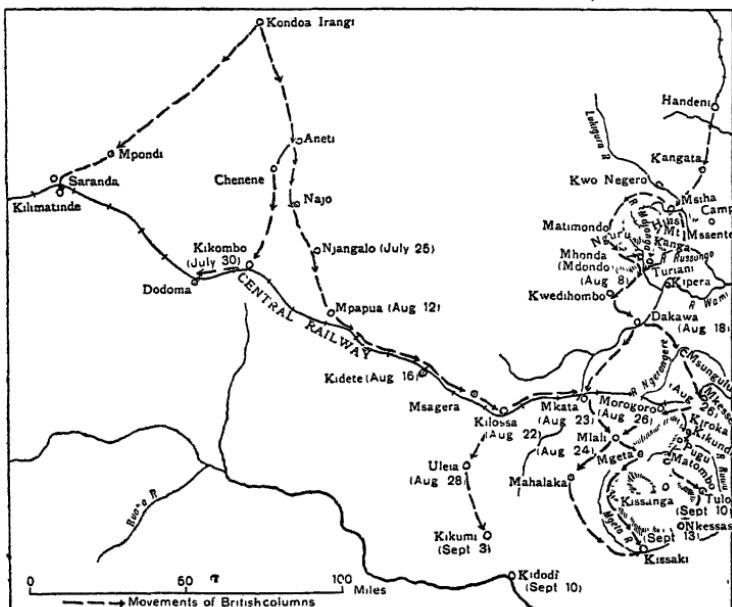
*July 30.* 25th July and Kikombo on the 30th. The end of July saw a hundred miles of the Central Railway in our possession, and though every bridge and culvert had been destroyed, the enemy had not had time to do serious damage to the track.

The much-tried 2nd Division had done marvels, but its precarious line of supply from Moschi had now been lengthened by another 100 miles,

and its next objective, Kilossa, was a further 120 miles on. Nevertheless, with scarcely a halt, it pushed down the railway. It partially solved its transport problem by narrowing the gauge of its heavy lorries; so that they could run on railway trolley wheels. Mpapua was taken on 12th August, Kidete on the 16th, and Kilossa on the Aug. 12-22nd. During July, too, the Belgians 22. and the British Lake detachment had been steadily drawing near to Tabora. Ujiji and Kigoma, on the shores of Tanganyika, had been occupied, and Ruchugi, on the line to Tabora; while from the north-west a column was approaching St. Michael. General Northey, in the south-west, had taken Malangali, and was moving on Iringa. Von Lettow had now but one direction of retreat left to him—the south.

It was time for General Smuts's main force to advance and clear the Nguru hills. The mountain region was some fifty miles long from north to south, and about twenty-five miles broad, and had on the north-east a subsidiary feature in the shape of Mount Kanga, between which and the Nguru *massif* the Mdjonga River flowed south to join the Wami. It was a region of narrow wooded defiles, rushing streams, and tracks winding on the edge of precipices—an ideal country for any defensive. General Smuts's plan was to send Sheppard's brigade against the main Kanga position, while Hannington's brigade advanced on its right down the Mdjonga valley on Matamondo and Turiani. Brits's 3rd Division was ordered to fetch a circuit round the north end of the mountains, and close in upon Mdondo from the west. Brits started on 5th

August, Hannyngham on the 6th, and Sheppard on the 7th. Sheppard feinted against the main enemy front at Kanga, but his left wing moved Aug. 5-7. six miles east so as to turn the mountain and come in on the enemy rear at the Russongo



The Advance across the Central Railway.

River. Enslin, with the mounted troops of Brits's division, occupied Mdondo on the 8th ; Aug. 8. but reported that the hill roads were impossible for wheeled traffic, with the result that all the transport had to be sent back to the Lukiguru to follow Sheppard. Hannyngham reached Matamondo on the 9th, where he found himself

strongly opposed. Beves's brigade was accordingly sent to support him, and meantime Enslin at Mdondo was threatening the enemy's rear and compelling him to think of retreat.

Had the whole 3rd Division been able to reach Mdondo, the Matamondo force might have been cut off. As it was, after severe fighting on the 10th and 11th, that force fell back, and on the 11th Sheppard reached the Russongo River, to find the enemy gone. He then marched south to Kipera, on the river Wami, while Brits and Hannington reached Turiani. By the 15th Brits and Hannington were clear of the Nguru hills, and on the 18th the whole British force was at Dakawa, at the crossing of the Wami. The enemy was retreating partly on Kilossa, but mainly on Morogoro. On the 22nd, as we have seen, Van Deventer reached Kilossa, so Morogoro became the only refuge.

General Smuts had hopes of bringing von Lettow to bay at Morogoro, and denying him retreat to the south. The place, which stands on a tributary of the Ngerengere, was protected from the Dakawa direction by a long line of hills, and had the Uluguru mountains behind it. To force him to fight, General Smuts devised an elaborate outflanking plan. Enslin, with the 2nd Mounted Brigade, was to make for the Central Railway at Mkata, to cut off the outlet to the west; while the main force marched south-east, in order to approach Morogoro by way of the Ngerengere valley, and to cut the enemy's retreat to the east by Kiroka.

Enslin duly reached Mkata on the 23rd and

Mlali on the 24th, where he received in support  
*Aug. 24.* the 1st Mounted Brigade, now under  
Brigadier-General Nussey, from Van  
Deventer's 2nd Division. Unfortunately there was  
a track, unknown to us, which led due south from  
Morogoro through the mountains to Kissaki, and  
by this way von Lettow escaped. On the 24th we

*Aug. 26.* reached the Ngerengere, on the 26th  
Hannington was at Mkesse, on the east,  
and the same day Sheppard entered Morogoro.  
But the enemy had gone, and gone precipitately,  
to judge by burning storehouses and the railway  
platform deep in spilt coffee.

General Smuts, though both men and animals  
were well-nigh worn out, pressed hard on his trail.

*Aug. 27.* On the 27th Sheppard was in Kiroka,  
and by the 30th the enemy was behind  
the little river Ruwu. The struggle for the Uluguru  
range was one of the hardest in the campaign.  
Brits's 3rd Division moved on the west side, with  
Enslin's Mounted Brigade on his left among the  
hills, while Hoskins's 1st Division took the eastern  
flank. Von Lettow fought stout rearguard actions,  
excellently supported by the nature of the country.  
“The road,” wrote General Smuts, “passes through  
very difficult broken foothills, covered either with  
bush or grass growing from six to twelve feet high,  
through which any progress was slow, painful, and  
difficult. The bridging of the Ruwu took several  
days, and for some distance beyond the road passes  
along the face of precipitous rocks round which the  
enemy had constructed a gallery on piles to afford  
a track for his transport. As the gallery would not  
carry our mechanical transport, it took us some days

to blast away the mountain side and construct a proper road." Tulo was not reached till 10th September, and Hannington, who led the vanguard, drove the enemy south of the Mgeta River on the 13th. It was clear, from the heavy gun ammunition left behind, that von Lettow had contemplated an elaborate defence of the Uluguru range; but the speed of the 1st Division, and the unexpected appearance of Enslin's troops at Mlali, had forced him to change his plans. Brits and Enslin followed the elephant track by Mahalaka which Speke and Burton had taken in 1857. On the 5th of September they were close on Kissaki, and it was decided to attack the place with Beves's infantry brigade, Enslin's mounted brigade of the 3rd Division, and Nussey's mounted brigade of the 2nd Division, which had been lent to Brits. The attack failed, because it was badly timed, the three units did not act together, and the thick bush prevented assistance being sent from one to the other. It was not till the 15th of September that, Hannington having taken Dutumi, eighteen miles to the east, Enslin managed to outflank the position and threaten the retreat to the Rufiji. The enemy fell back on a defensive line along the Mgeta River.

During this period of hard fighting astride the Central Railway, the situation on the coast was being rapidly improved. Brigadier-General Edwards, the Inspector-General of Communications, moved south from Bagamoyo with two columns, one along the Ruwu River towards the Central Railway, and the other direct on Dar-es-Salaam. British warships appeared off the coast, and on 3rd September the

German capital surrendered. The time had now come to occupy the whole coast, and, with *Sept. 3.* the assistance of the Navy, Mikindani was seized on 13th September, Ssudi Bay on the 15th, Lindi on the 16th, and Kilwa and Kilwa Kissiwani on the 7th. Kilwa was an important base, and a strong column was landed there for operations along the Matandu River and in the Mtumbi mountains. Dar-es-Salaam was also a vital centre, and from it the work of restoring the eastern end of the railway, most comprehensively wrecked by the Germans, was carried on. Between the sea and Kilossa our Pioneer Corps had to rebuild no less than sixty bridges.

At the same time Van Deventer was not idle. On 28th August he had taken Uleia, and by 3rd *Aug. 28-* September was at Kikumi. On the *Sept. 10.* 10th he was at Kidodi, on the Great Ruaha River, where he found the enemy in position. General Northey, too, had occupied

*Aug. 29.* Lupembe on 19th August and Iringa on the 29th, and was moving upon the Mahenge plateau from the west; while on the south he had taken Ssongea, eighteen miles east of Wied-hafen, on Lake Nyasa. Farther north Sir Charles Crewe and Général Tombeur were converging on Tabora, which was entered by the Belgians on 19th

*Sept. 19.* September. The German garrison there fell back towards the upper waters of the Great Ruaha, where they had to face both Van Deventer and Northey.

One other episode remains to be mentioned. On *Mar. 9.* the 9th of March Portugal, the oldest ally of Britain, had declared war on Germany. Her main military effort was to be on the

Flanders front, where presently she had two divisions in line with the British. But since her colony of Mozambique bordered German East Africa on the south, she played some small part also in this campaign. Her troops, under General Gil, crossed the frontier, the Rovuma River, and occupied various points on its northern shore. As it was evident that von Lettow's retreat would be to the southward, the Portuguese forces must sooner or later come into action.

The position at the end of September was that in little more than six months the German hold on East Africa had been narrowed down to the area between the Rufiji and Mgeta Rivers in the north-east, and the Great Ruaha and Ulanga Rivers in the south-west. Outside this area the enemy's only troops were the Tabora garrison, now making its painful way eastward, and a small detachment between Dar-es-Salaam and the Rufiji. With the exception of the Mahenge plateau, he had lost every healthy district of the colony. He was dwelling now in fever swamps, while the bulk of our troops were on higher ground. But General Smuts's gallant forces were woefully exhausted; and far from comfortable in the way of supplies. The fighting front was fed from the railhead at Korogwe, west of Tanga, and everything had to be brought 300 miles by hill paths and bush tracks. Often the ration problem became acute. At Kissaki, for example, a sudden storm of rain destroyed the roads, and for a fortnight our troops there lived off native millet and the flesh of hippos shot in the Mgeta River. "Fly" had played havoc with our transport animals, and large numbers of men were down with malaria.

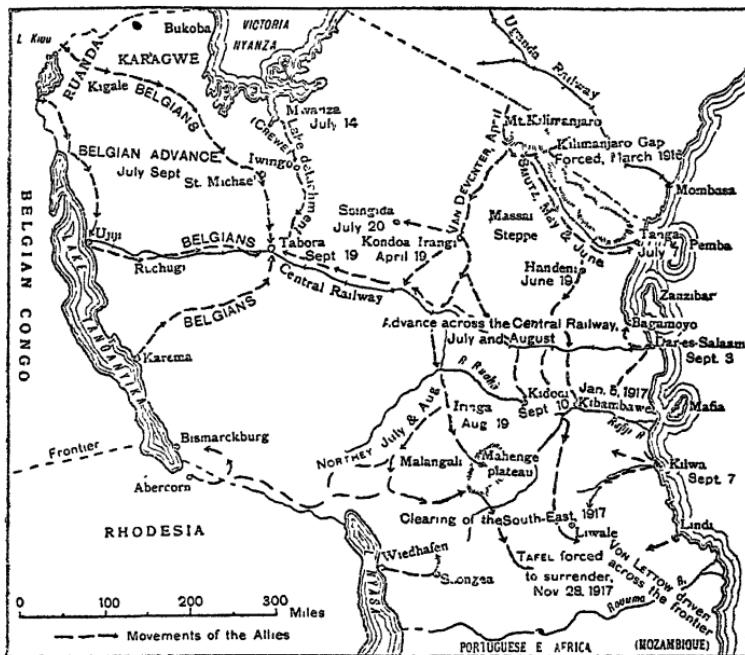
The 3rd Division had to be sent back to Morogoro to recover strength; and though we harassed the enemy on the Mgeta line, major operations were for the time being at an end.

The rest of the campaign, it was evident, would be in an unhealthy country, and it was necessary to have medical reports on the fitness of the troops. As a result, 12,000 men were sent back to South Africa as unfit for further campaigning. By way of reinforcements, the Loyal North Lancashires returned from the Cape at full strength, and the Nigerian Brigade, under Brigadier-General Cunliffe, arrived in November. It was calculated that by the end of the year the worst part of the transport difficulties would be overcome by the opening of the Central Railway for traffic between Dar-es-Salaam and Dodoma. The enemy's main force lay facing us north of the Rufiji, and if compelled to retire, he must fall back either on Mahenge or into Portuguese territory. To force the crossing of the Rufiji was no light task, for it was more than a quarter of a mile wide. General Smuts's aim was to cut off the Rufiji force from Mahenge, and at the same time prevent their retirement to the south. Accordingly, he established a base at Kilwa, on the coast, from which columns could work north and north-west. He hoped to cross the Rufiji somewhere well to the west of Kibambawe, in order to bar the road to Mahenge and then join hands with the Kilwa column, so as to close in on the enemy's rear.

General Hannington yielded up the command of the 2nd East African Brigade to Colonel O'Grady,

## THE CONQUEST OF EAST AFRICA. 157

and took over the Kilwa force, which was now called the 3rd East African Brigade. There were other changes. The 3rd Division was disbanded, the Lake detachment ceased to exist, Van Deventer's command was reorganized, and reinforcements were



East Africa.—Sketch showing the general scheme of the operations.

sent to Northey. The situation in the area of the last-named during October became interesting, for the Tabora garrison succeeded in breaking through and cutting the communications between Northey's main body and the Iranga troops. A small British post at Ngominji was surrounded and taken pris-

oner. There were various minor actions at Madi-bira, Malingali, and Lupembe, in which the enemy lost heavily. In November General Smuts visited that area, and instructed Van Deventer to base himself on Iringa and Northey on Lupembe, and between them force the enemy beyond the Ruhudje and Ulanga Rivers. Meantime Hannyngham at Kilwa had done good work in clearing the Matandu valley and the southern slopes of the Mtumbi mountains. In November the whole 1st Division, less Sheppard's brigade, was transferred to Kilwa, with General Hoskins in command. There during December there was a good deal of fighting, but by the close of the year Hoskins felt himself in a position to advance towards the Lower Rufiji when our main forces should attack. Meantime the Portuguese were driven off the north bank of the Rovuma, and it was clear that if von Lettow broke out in that direction he would meet with no serious opposition.

The great advance was ordered for New Year's Day, 1917. The plan of it was that Beves's brigade

*Jan. 1, 1917.* should move to the west and cross the Rufiji just below its junction with the Ruaha, and that Sheppard and Cunliffe should make a similar flanking movement on the east. The vital part was that of Beves. On the night of

*Jan. 2-5.* the 2nd he was only twelve miles from the great river, and at dawn on the 3rd had crossed and established a bridgehead on the southern bank. On the 5th Sheppard, after hard fighting, in which the most famous of African hunters, Captain F. C. Selous, fell at the head of his company, reached Kibambawe, to find that the enemy had

crossed after destroying the bridge. That night he managed to effect a crossing a little higher up, in the course of which he had to deal with some truculent hippos, and next night the passage was continued till the 30th Jan. 6. Punjabis were established on the south shore. Beves meanwhile was making good his hold as far as Luhembero, and Cunliffe's brigade was ordered to follow him. The enemy had been completely outmanœuvred, and with few casualties we had won the Rufiji crossing.

The situation now was that the Tabora garrison had slipped away from both Northeby and Van Deventer, and was making for Mahenge, while von Lettow had got across the Rufiji without being forced to action. It showed the impossibility of surrounding an enemy in such country ; he could be driven in, but not brought to a standstill. Meantime Hoskins's force from Kilwa was steadily advancing to the north-west. General Smuts, reviewing the situation, saw that between Cunliffe on the Rufiji and Hannington at Ngarambi there was a gap of some forty miles, the only outlet through which the enemy could escape. If the two could join hands at Lugaliro the trap might be closed. Failing such a success, there must be a converging movement from the Rufiji and Kilwa upon Liwale in the south.

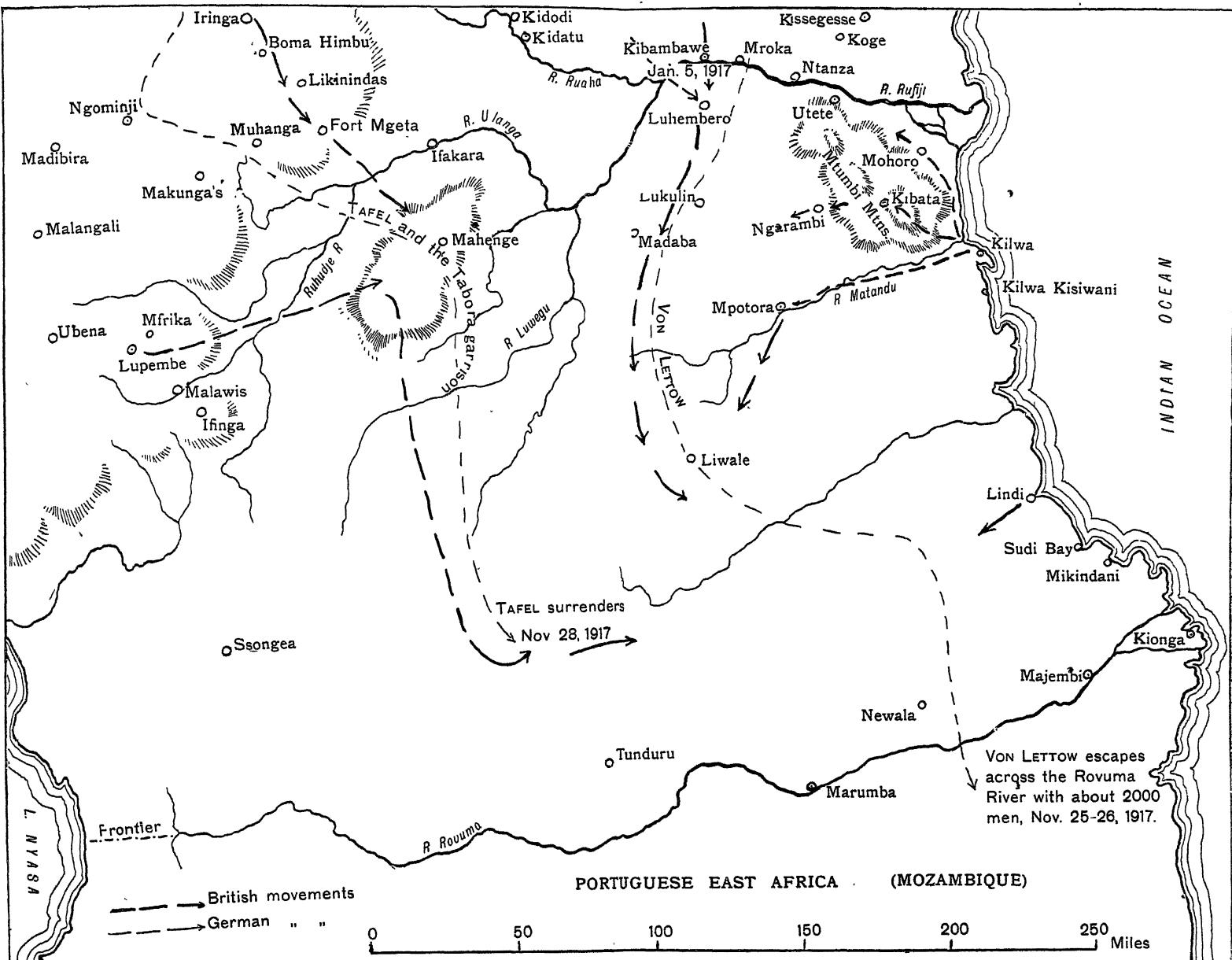
But General Smuts was not suffered to conclude the campaign which he had devised. He was summoned to England to the Imperial War Conference, and left Dar-es-Salaam on the 26th of January.

The new Commander-in-Chief was Lieutenant-General Hoskins, formerly of the 1st Division.

With his accession to command the campaign took on a new phase. The main problem had been solved ; the country had been virtually conquered ; all the main centres were in our hands ; the worst transport difficulties had been surmounted ; and the enemy had become a hunted remnant. But the colony was not yet cleared, and it was to take many weary months before the last man of von Lettow's following crossed the Rovuma. The difficulty now was that, with the exception of Mahenge, there were no such strategical objectives as had been offered by Moschi, Tabora, or Dar-es-Salaam. The campaign had become a man-hunt, a chase of a new De Wet, with difficulties to face which no British commander had dreamed of in 1902.

The operations of 1917 may be briefly summarized. During January the central forces advanced east and south from the Rufiji, where the enemy fought stubborn rearguard actions, while the Kilwa force pushed west into the Rufiji delta from Mohoro, and Northey drove the enemy from the high ground east of Lupembe. The situation remained unchanged during the rains—the longest and heaviest ever known in that country—save that under our pressure there was a steady trickling of German troops southwards both from the Rufiji and Mahenge. In the beginning of May the enemy was in two main bodies—one between 4,000 and 5,000 strong, under von Lettow himself, in the Matandu valley, to which had been added the troops driven out of the Rufiji delta ; and one under Tafel, some 2,000 or 3,000 strong, based on Mahenge. Occasionally, and especially in the west, oddments broke back northward, and these were pursued





The Operations in the South-East of German East Africa in the Winter of 1916 and in 1917.  
(Only the general direction of the movements is Indicated.)



and accounted for by our mounted men. One isolated party, foraging in search of food, had reached Portuguese territory; and one large body, 600 strong, under a certain Naumann, gave more trouble north of the Central Railway, and was not disposed of till October. These raiders covered in their travels about 2,000 miles, having started from the Nyasa neighbourhood in February, and passed through Itunda, crossing the railway east of Tabora in May. They had a brush with the Belgians east of Lake Victoria, and then visited in turn Lake Magadi, Kondo Irangi, Handeni, and Moschi, being finally brought to bay in the middle of the Massai steppe. Naumann was a brutal scoundrel, but his enterprise was a bold one. "Such a raid," wrote General Van Deventer, "could perhaps only have been carried out in a country like German East Africa, where the bush is often so thick that two considerable forces may pass within a mile unaware of each other's presence, and where a ruthless leader of a small force can nearly always live on the country."

Van Deventer took over the supreme command from General Hoskins at the end of May. He himself led the main army against von Lettow's eastern force; while Northey, with the assistance of a Belgian contingent, closed in on Tafel's western force in the Mahenge area, shepherding northwards the bands that were making for Portuguese Nyasaland. In July there was hard fighting in the Kilwa district, and von Lettow was slowly driven south from the Matandu River towards Lindi. Early in October the Belgians occupied the Mahenge plateau, and moved southward in touch with our troops advancing from the west. The doom of Tafel's western

detachment was now assured. It tried to join hands with von Lettow by going east through the wild country north of the Rovuma ; but on 26th November Tafel discovered that his way was barred. He attempted to break back, failed, and on 28th No-

*Nov. 28.* vember surrendered unconditionally. By the beginning of the same month von Lettow was driven south-west of Lindi. There was no other course before him but precipitate flight, and moving with great speed, he reached the Rovuma, where the Portuguese posts were of no avail to hold him. With some 2,000 men he crossed the

*Nov. 25-* river on 25th and 26th November, and  
*26.* the colony of German East Africa was clear of its former masters.

The ten months since General Smuts's departure had been no less a trial of fortitude than the ten months of his command. The weather had been bad, sickness was rife, and "a brigade which could put 1,400 rifles into the firing-line considered itself singularly fortunate." Between May and November the British casualties in action alone had been close on 6,000 ; but, to set against these, 1,618 Germans and 5,482 natives had been killed or captured. It had been a bitter struggle, and before it ceased ninetenths of the enemy's white and black *personnel* had either perished or been taken prisoner. "My predecessors," wrote General Van Deventer, "have well described the difficulties of advancing through tropical Africa against an enemy in possession of interior lines who can advance and retire along carefully prepared lines of supply. As the area of operations diminished, so the potential advantages of these interior lines increased, and the fiercer became the

fighting. The *moral* of the enemy never wavered, and nothing but the determined gallantry and endurance of our troops finally crushed him. To the infantry—British, South African, Indian, West and East African—I owe unqualified thanks and praise, and especially to the regimental officers who set an example which all have followed."

The campaign in German East Africa must rank as unique among the operations of the Great War. It was the most colossal "drive" ever undertaken in modern warfare, having regard both to the size of the country and the intricacy of its configuration. In it the fantastic was of daily occurrence. Outposts driven in by lions, river crossings confused by nervous hippos, engagements with the enemy disorganized by impartial attacks of rhinos against both sides—where else could such incidents be found? It was a blending of the hoar-ancient and the ultra-modern—airplanes, barbed wire, and machine guns, with the staked pit which had been the device of neolithic man. And as a background it had the brooding terrors of the equatorial climate, death lurking in pool and swamp, in arid bush and ferny ravine, on mountain lawn and in lush valley.

From the military point of view it was a remarkable performance, and the credit belonged to both combatants. The young Staff officer from Posen showed a true genius for war, far greater than that of many belauded German generals in Europe. He played what cards he possessed with masterly skill and a supreme patience. On the British side the task was akin to that in South-

West Africa and in the Cameroons, but the harder inasmuch as the country was larger and more inaccessible and the enemy better prepared. No campaign in tropical lands in British history had offered so difficult a problem, for in none had the enemy possessed highly-trained European officers. In transport difficulties alone it outdistanced all our former expeditions on the Indian border, in West Africa, or on the Nile. Indeed, it combined the difficulties both of a civilized and a savage war. We had to face modern weapons and modern strategy; but a decision could not be secured merely by defeating the enemy, for he could fade away into dim forests, and find shelter in the ancient inorganic barbarism of the land.

The chief credit belongs to General Smuts, and the reason of his achievement was that he put his whole soul into it, that he treated it as a major operation of the first importance, and was as resolute to complete the work as if the war had been confined to that one area. Without his fiery energy, his far-reaching strategical grasp, or his quick imagination, we should speedily have reached a stalemate; and in two years, instead of clearing the country, have advanced perhaps to the Wami, perhaps only to the Pangani. He combined all our assets and all our far-flung detachments in one closely-wrought strategical plan. He did more, for he inspired his whole command with his own magnetic spirit, and lifted it over hard places which might well have proved unconquerable without such leadership. He was the soul and brain of the army he led, and though in men like Van Deventer and Northey and Hanneyngton he had most able lieutenants, it was the

shaping and controlling mind at the top which made victory certain.

But he could not have succeeded but for the splendid material of his army. Its trials were of a kind to sap the courage of most men. Poor food, excessive fatigue, and constant sickness are the hardest foes for humanity to strive with, and all who are familiar with tropical Africa know the deadly lassitude which infects the blood of Europeans and takes the edge from their spirit. In two months during the autumn of 1916 the wastage of animals was : horses, 10,000 ; mules, 10,000 ; oxen, 11,000 ; donkeys, 2,500. In one week of the same period there were 9,000 sick in hospital, 4,000 of them white men, and over 200 officers. Let the reader reflect what such a handicap meant for operations, and then assess the credit for those swift marches which flung the enemy from position after position, and tore river lines from his grasp before he was aware of the menace. It was a war on both sides of picked men, black and white. The Angoni of the King's African Rifles, the Manyema of the Belgians, the Wanyamwezi of the Germans, were the military *élite* of Central Africa. We had behind us famous Indian battalions ; corps of settlers accustomed to fend for themselves in the wilds ; scouts and hunters who had long made a dwelling in the bush ; the same type of South African infantryman who in France had fought at Delville Wood and Arras ; and those mounted Boers whose quality we knew well, and who among natives who had never seen a horse won a legendary fame as the "Kabure"—a new animal brought forth by the war. Their heroism and endurance were not expended on a

mere side-show, for, far as East Africa seemed removed from the strategical centre of gravity, the difficulty of its conquest showed, in General Smuts's words, what an "immense tropical territory, with almost unlimited economic and military possibilities, and provided with excellent submarine bases," might become as an aid to that world empire of which Germany dreamed. And it strengthened the mind of the Allies in the resolution that "a land where so many of our heroes lost their lives or their health—where, under the most terrible and exacting conditions, human loyalty and human sacrifice were poured out so lavishly in a great cause—should never be allowed to become a menace to the future peaceful development of the world."

## CHAPTER CL.

### THE EXTREMITY OF RUSSIA.

The Beginning of the Bolshevik *Régime*—Germany agrees to negotiate—The Bolshevik Strength—Their Antagonists—Their Creed—Its Affinity with Prussianism—Murder of General Dukhonin—Beginning of Brest Litovsk Conference—An Armistice signed—The Invitation to the Allies—The Conference Discussions—The Russian Proposals—Provisional Agreement reached—Germany and the Border Provinces—Poland—The Ukraine—Finland—Rumania—The Caucasus and Central Asia—Trotski's Policy—The January Negotiations—Trotski returns to Petrograd—Constituent Assembly dissolved—Murder of Shingarev and Kokoshin—Trotski attacks the Ukraine—Peace between Ukraine and Central Powers—Conference breaks up—Germans take Reval and Pskov—The Bolsheviks capitulate—Peace of Brest Litovsk—Peace made with Rumania and Finland—What the Central Powers gained—Kuhlmann's Triumph—The Bolsheviks' Record—Bolshevism and Prussianism unmasked—Elements of Hope in Russia—The Church—The Czechoslovaks.

ON the 8th of November the Bolsheviks had seized the reins of government, and that day Lenin telegraphed to all the belligerent Powers proposing a three months' armistice. The next day was devoted to a tour round the various *Nov. 8.* administrative departments, which for the most part had been deserted by their officials, and the installation of a new and wholly *Nov. 10.* untrained bureaucracy. On the 10th a batch of decrees transferred the possession of all

factories to the operatives, empowered municipalities to sequestrate house property, and abolished private ownership in land. An attempt of the Railwaymen's Federation to bring about a Coalition Government failed signally, for the little group at the Smolny Institute refused to share their power with any colleagues. Presently all newspapers not of the Bolshevik persuasion were suppressed, and private stocks of paper and printing-presses confiscated. On

*Nov. 22.* the 22nd Colonel Muraviev, an ex-regular officer with a black record, who now commanded the Petrograd district, issued an order announcing that the war was over, and providing

*Nov. 28.* for the disbanding of troops. On the 28th the German Command in the East agreed to negotiate for an armistice. The Bolsheviks were firmly in the saddle, and had started on their wild ride.

Let us consider on what forces they could count for support. The first and most important was the Soviets of the towns. To the average Russian local government was the only form he understood, and the Soviet system, patchy as it was everywhere and infamous in many places, met undoubtedly with a real popular acceptance. It was controlled by the Bolsheviks, as every institution in such a time will be controlled by its most extreme elements. But the system was not universal. In Siberia it was weak ; in Finland, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus it had to struggle with nationalist movements ; and in the Cossack country it had scarcely begun. The Bolshevik writ did not run generally save in northern and central European Russia. The second was the universal desire of the people for peace, a desire on

which Lenin at once took action. The third was the craving for that land reform which Kerenski had promised but never enforced. Last may be reckoned the widespread unsettlement of the Revolution, the passion for change, for anything provided it was novel, the dream of a new world which could only come into being after the complete destruction of the old. Let it be added that the men of Smolny were not yet compromised by failure, and that they had for the moment no serious opponents. The old Provisional Government and Kerenski had faded away in effectiveness. No party, from the Social Revolutionaries to the Cadets, had real leaders, or knew what they wanted. The Army chiefs were now without armies. The Cossacks of the Don and the Urals were not the stuff to restore an old *régime*, nor was Kaledin a Duke of Albemarle.

The dangers in their amazing venture were prodigious. The Bolsheviks had no disciplined military force behind them, save what they could themselves create, and they had the Germans at their door. The railways were in chaos, the rich coal and iron basin of the Donetz was in unfriendly hands, and it was hard to see how the people could be fed or kept in employment. The treasury was empty, and they had vast commitments to meet. Under such conditions they could only hope to endure even for a few months by a crescendo of violent deeds. Since there was no income they must live upon capital—the gold reserve and private bank balances—and they must keep their followers in good heart by something not distinguishable from loot. Like a drunken man, they could only keep erect while they moved swiftly, for if they went slowly

they would fall. To enforce their mandates, they enlisted *condottieri* from the gutters, the Red Guards, in whose ranks every miscreant found good pay and a life of license, and who formed a bodyguard for the Government that ensured them a living. It was all mad and chaotic, but it was not purposeless. Lenin and Trotski sought to bring about a world-wide revolution ; to annihilate everywhere the *bourgeoisie* and the intellectuals, and to establish a proletariat tyranny. Chaos was their object, the chaos and destruction of the normal state. They did not drift, but, to begin with at anyrate, strode with firm steps into what the majority of mankind would call the mire. They knew their own mind with complete precision.

It is necessary to examine briefly the contents of that mind. On one thing we can be clear : we know what was not in it—the accepted formulas of Western democracy. We must remember that the Russian Revolution, which began with a *coup d'état*, had become a revolution in very truth, involving the utter collapse of the old system of government, and the release of elemental forces which were for the time being only destructive. It had not been organized under the inspiration of a formative creed, and there was no scheme in the heads of its makers to replace what they had destroyed. This was made plain by the behaviour first of the Provisional Government and then of Kerenski. They acted as if liberty were in itself a cure for all ills ; they aimed at releasing rather than at governing. With such a negative attitude no constructive policy was likely to be either framed or enforced. Those who saw the need of government could only hark back to

fragments of the old order, and these were unacceptable to a people drunk with novelties. Another point must not be forgotten. The class war had been proclaimed from the very beginning. Even the moderate Social Revolutionaries were committed to it. Whatever their leaders might say, the whole trend of their thought was towards the domination by peasants and workmen of the classes who had hitherto ruled the land. The under-dog was to come to his own. Since the vast majority of the Russian people were under-dogs, this sudden mass-consciousness swept even wise men off their feet ; and, though here and there a thinker entered a *caveat* against jerry-built millenniums, he found no hearers. The Bolsheviks did not invent the class war ; they found it the incoherent creed of the nation, including the bulk of their nominal opponents.

We can picture the Bolshevik leaders slipping back to Russia in the spring of 1917 from foreign soil, where for years they had lived on a diet of futile political discussion varied by hopeless dreams. Suddenly their dreams had come true. They found the situation they had not dared to think of, and a nation hanging on their words. They were not democrats in the Western sense ; the great doctrines of our policy—liberty, brotherhood, and an equal law—signified nothing to them. They were class maniacs, and, in their own eyes, class martyrs, and the time for their revenge had come. Having lived so long among abstractions, reality meant little to them ; and, having thought only in negations, they had neither the wish nor the power to construct. Their long sojourn in the underworld had deprived them of the chance of serious political

education, as much as the most illiterate mujik. They owed nothing to the West, and why should they? They did not admire its traditions or accept its precepts. They found Russia, like a man of a gross habit of body, suffering from a sharp fever. Themselves consumed with a worse fever, they did not seek to lower the patient's temperature, but to infect him with a wilder virus, and, through him, the whole of mankind.

Therefore, once they were given the chance, they were certain to act, and to act swiftly. They would make the class war not an aspiration but a fact. They would liberate not only from the last shackles of Tsardom, but from that tumid constitutionalism which the pedants of the West misnamed democracy. Their intellectual baggage was of the flimsiest, but it is possible to characterize some of the pieces. In the choice of them there is to be noted a curious inconsistency and confusion of mind. They preached universal self-determination, but it is probable that they did not seriously believe in it. Self-determination carried to a logical conclusion means anarchy and particularism run mad; and in the interests of their class war they were not prepared to allow irrelevant cross-divisions. As soon as the Ukraine and Finland proposed to set up independent governments, the Bolsheviks showed themselves the most rigid of centralists.

But on one matter they were not in doubt. Their cardinal tenet was the class war, their main watchword Karl Marx's historic appeal: "Workers of the world, unite; you have a world to win, and nothing to lose but your chains." It was this intense concentration that gave their creed not an

intellectual but an emotional coherence. As pacifists, they brought not peace but a sword ; as liberators, they would enslave all but a single class ; as levellers, they sought to establish a reversed tyranny, a shabby oligarchy from the pavement. It was this obsession which mastered alike the cold fanaticism of Lenin; the mild utopianism of Tchicherin, and the more supple talents of Jewish adventurers like Trotski and Radek. They knew that their reign could not last, but they wished to break down as much as possible of the old world in the time permitted to them, and to kindle a fire from the *débris* which would send sparks to the four corners of the globe. They were in the fullest sense adventurers, making hay while their sun shone, and in fever-stricken Russia they found a popular mood which gave them their opportunity.

In the ranks of Bolshevism were many agents of Germany, some of whom had been in the Russian Secret Police in the old days, scoundrels who would sell their souls for hire. But, though the leaders were wholly unscrupulous in their methods, and would pocket German gold shamelessly if it helped their purpose, they had their own game to play, and had small affection for *Germanenthum* in itself. Yet Prussianism and Bolshevism were nearly related. Both unduly simplified the world, both were without sense of history, both would substitute for the rich and organic variousness of life a harsh mechanism. The inspiration of both was Central European. Each was a devotee of *Machtpolitik*; each sought, in defiance of right and justice, to impose its theories on the world by force. "It should be observed," said Trotski later at Brest

Litovsk, "that the Russian Government is based upon power. Throughout the whole of history no other government has been known. So long as society consists of contending classes, the power of government will be based on strength, and these governments will maintain their dominion by force." It is Prussianism's authentic voice.

It should be realized that Lenin and his colleagues were not anarchists in the common sense of the word, though they succeeded in producing anarchy. They aimed at establishing a strong, rigid, and narrow government, of whose rules they would tolerate no breach. They did not form the extremest left of the Revolution, for there was an extremer section than they, who aimed at a world of complete individual license. Against these Lenin was for ever inveighing, as foes of society. They were his enemies on the one side ; on the other were ranged the more moderate Socialists under leaders like Tchernov, who appealed to the peasantry as the Bolsheviks appealed to the workmen of the towns ; the Centre parties, supported by the *bourgeoisie* and the *intelligentsia*, but without leaders, for Miliukhov was more a schoolmaster than a statesman ; the Cossacks, self-centred, scattered and unreliable ; the nationalists of Finland, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus ; the Orthodox Church and its hierarchy ; the loyal elements of the Army, every day declining in number ; and somewhere in the darkness those who still dreamed of a monarchical restoration. The pure Bolsheviks were only a small fraction of the Russian people ; but they were united and purposeful, while their foes were impotent and divided, and they preached a creed of which the

main tenets appealed to the weariness and ignorance of the ordinary man, though he would have rejected the full body of doctrine had he understood it. The Army chiefs were off the immediate stage—Kornilov under arrest, Kaledin among his Cossacks, Alexeiev and Denikin and Brussilov in retirement. Kerenski had disappeared, and Savinkov, a far more dangerous antagonist, had returned to that underworld of whose intricacies he was a master.

The Bolsheviks' first task was to stop the war. They had already destroyed the Russian Army; they must now destroy all other armies by appealing to the blind masses behind them. They were pacifists of the most militant brand, for they sought peace not by submitting to the will of a conqueror, but by using negotiations as a means of propaganda among the conqueror's own troops and throughout the world. If only they could awake their feverish class mania in Germany, they would win from their apparent abasement a lasting triumph. Hence the history of the Bolshevik *régime* is to be found in its foreign policy. Till the end of the year there were few outstanding events in the chaos of their domestic government. On 4th December Dukhonin, the former commander-in-chief, was barbarously murdered at army headquarters. From the 9th onward, when Kaledin took the field in the Don region, where he was presently joined by Kornilov, there was constant fighting around Kharkov and Rostov between his Cossacks and the Red Guards, the latter having the support of sailors from the Black Sea Fleet. The 11th was the day fixed originally for the meeting of the Constituent As-

Dec. 4.  
Dec. 9.  
Dec. 11.

sembly, but nothing happened. The meeting was postponed, for the way in which the elections had gone did not satisfy the junta at Smolny. But these events were of small importance compared to what was happening inside the German lines.

On 28th November, as we have seen, Germany accepted the Bolshevik scheme for an armistice, and Count Hertling in the Reichstag announced that his Government agreed to the Russian proposals as a basis of discussion. On 2nd December

*Dec. 2.* hostilities ceased on the Eastern front, and fraternization began. The Allies formally protested, and Trotski seized the occasion to deliver an inflammatory speech denouncing foreign interference.

*Dec. 3-5.* On the 3rd a Russian deputation arrived at the headquarters of Prince Leopold of Bavaria at Brest Litovsk. On the 5th a preliminary conference opened there, with General Hoffmann, Prince Leopold's Chief of Staff, presiding. Representatives were present from Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. The Russian delegates were a peasant, a private soldier, a sailor, and one or two Bolshevik politicians, accompanied by several minor Staff officers to act as expert advisers. One of the latter committed suicide in despair during the conference. How preposterous was the whole delegation may be judged from the fact that one member was a certain Vladimir Schneeur, an official of the old Tsarist Secret Police and a German agent. They asked for the retirement of the German detachments from the islands in the Gulf of Riga, and the promise that, while negotiations continued, no German forces would be sent from the East to other battle-grounds. They

pressed, too, for an armistice on all fronts alike. The German delegates refused these demands, and for some days there was an indeterminate discussion. Finally, on 15th December, an armistice *Dec. 15.* agreement was signed, providing for a truce on the Eastern front for twenty-eight days from noon on 17th December. The Germans agreed in the meantime to transfer no troops westward, but they promptly proceeded to break their word.\*

Meantime the Rumanian army, now in an impossible position, had been forced by the defection of its Russian contingents to join in the truce as from 6th December. That day Trot-*Dec. 6.* ski, as the Bolshevik Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, issued a Note to the Allies declaring that the coming armistice offered them a *locus poenitentiae* as to war aims. "The period is, even for the present disturbed state of international communications, amply sufficient to afford the Allied Governments the opportunity to define their attitude towards the peace negotiations—that is, their willingness or their refusal to take part in the negotiation for an armistice and peace. In the case of a refusal they must declare clearly and deliberately before all mankind the aims for which the peoples of Europe may have to shed their blood during a fourth year of war."

It was a suggestion which no Allied Government could accept. To negotiate with an undefeated and impenitent Germany would have been to disown

\* Six divisions, the 31st, 42nd, 84th, 14th Bavarians, 4th Ersatz and 81st Reserve were moved to France and Flanders between 16th and 31st December.

the cause for which they had entered the war. But for Germany herself the occasion came as a godsend. She entered upon the game with every card in her hand. To the doctrinaires of Bolshevism, who would waste hours hunting for metaphysical formulæ, she could oppose trained diplomats with a policy and a purpose. At the worst she could secure stagnation on her Eastern front, and thereby change the whole orientation of the war. At the best she might throw an apple of discord into all the councils of her enemies. Her danger was that she might overrate the simplicity of the game, and play too blindly for present advantage. As for the self-deceivers of Smolny, they were swollen with vainglory. By the sheer might of intellect they would force a settlement upon the world, a settlement which would not only put an end to an irrelevant war, but would leave them with a mighty vantage ground for reshaping human society according to their pet pattern. They were wildly in error ; yet it is probable that history will put the worst blunder to the credit not of the crude theorists of Petrograd, but of the cool and calculating politicians of Berlin.

The Brest'Litovsk meeting to discuss terms of peace was formally opened on Saturday, 22nd December.

*Dec. 22.* Among the obscure Russian delegates only the names of Joffe and Kamenev were known to the world. Germany sent Kuhlmann, her Foreign Secretary, one of the most astute of the lesser statesmen of Europe ; and from Austro-Hungary came Count Czernin, who aped the Kuhlmann manner, and aimed at combining a minimum of practical liberalism with a maximum

of democratic profession. The attitude of both may be judged from Kuhlmann's preliminary declaration : "Our negotiations will be guided by a spirit of placable humanity and mutual esteem. They must take into account what is an accomplished historical fact, in order not to lose our footing on the firm ground of reality ; but on the other hand they must be inspired by the new great dominant motive that has brought us together. I regard it as an auspicious circumstance that our negotiations begin in sight of that Christmas festival which for many centuries past has promised peace upon earth and goodwill to men." That is to say, Germany, as conqueror, was not prepared to give up any material conquest, but she was ready to satisfy the Bolsheviks by every pious declaration which sounded bravely and signified nothing.

If such an attitude held out little hope of satisfactory results, the Bolsheviks were no less uncompromising. Their heads were turned by what they considered their success in the first round. "We did not overthrow the Tsar," said Trotski in Petrograd on the opening day of the Conference, "in order to fall on our knees before the Kaiser and beg for peace. . . . We summon all to a holy war against Imperialism in every country. If owing to our economic ruin we are unable to fight, and are obliged to renounce the struggle for our ideals, we will tell our foreign comrades that that struggle is not ended but only postponed." In his eyes Brest Litovsk was an occasion less for diplomacy than for propaganda. And meantime, to the embarrassment of Germany, his agents were scattering their appeals everywhere among the inactive German troops on

the now stagnant front. The Bolsheviks at this period were true to their anti-militarist ideals. They fought not for their own power only, but for the triumph of their creed in any land to which they could gain access.

The scene in the Council Chamber at Brest Litovsk was worthy of the art of some great historical painter. On one side sat the bland and specious representatives of the Central Powers, black-coated and much beribboned and bestarred, exquisitely polite, but blundering often in giving a needless "von" to some Russian Jew or the title of "Excellency" to some shaggy "comrade" from Smolny. Among them could be noted the narrow face and sinister eyes of Kuhlmann, whose courtesy in debate never failed; the handsome presence of Czernin, who was put up by his leader to fly the wilder sort of kite, because of his artless *bonhomie*; and the chubby Pickwickian countenance of General Hoffmann, who now and then grew scarlet and combative when he felt that some military pronouncement was called for. Behind the Teutonic delegates was an immense band of Staff officers and civil servants and spectacled professorial experts. Each delegation used its own tongue, and the discussions were apt to be lengthy. Opposite the ranks of Teutondom sat the Russians, mostly dirty and ill-clad, who smoked their large pipes placidly through the debates. Much of the discussion seemed not to interest them, and they intervened in monosyllables, save when an incursion into the *ethos* of politics let loose a flood of confused metaphysics. The Conference had the air partly of an assembly of well-mannered employers

trying to deal with a specially obtuse delegation of workmen, partly of urbane hosts presiding at a village school treat.

The Russian proposals were seven in number. There was to be no forcible appropriation of territory taken in the course of the campaigns, and the occupying armies were to be withdrawn at once. Complete political independence was to be restored to all peoples who had lost it during the war. Right of self-determination was to be granted to all nations, and in the case of territories inhabited by several nationalities special provision was to be made to safeguard the rights of minorities. No indemnities were to be paid, war requisitions were to be returned, and sufferers by the war compensated from a special fund levied on all belligerents according to their resources. Finally, colonies were to be treated on the same basis as parent countries, and any economic boycott after the war was forbidden.

Of these proposals, all except the first three were acceptable enough to the Central Powers; but none were acceptable to the Allies, since they ignored Germany's responsibility for the origin of the war and the peculiar nature of her political creed and her national ambitions. As for the first three, Germany hoped to whittle them down in actual drafting, and in the meantime to use them to make trouble with the Allies. On Christmas Day Count *Dec. 25.* Czernin was put up to announce the readiness of the Central Powers to assent to a peace without annexations or indemnities provided that the Allies forthwith pledged themselves to these principles, and agreed to join in the negotiations.

It was accordingly decided that the Conference should rise until January 4, 1918, in order to give the Allies an opportunity of considering the proposal.

*Dec. 28.* On the 28th a provisional agreement was reached regarding the resumption of normal relations between Russia and Central Europe. Treaty arrangements interrupted by the war were to be resumed, and the diplomatic and consular service was to be restored. As a result Petrograd was at once flooded with German delegations. Meantime the Central Powers had prepared two articles as a draft for an eventual peace treaty. The first laid down that Russia and Germany were to declare the state of war at an end, and that as soon as peace was concluded and the Russian armies demobilized, Germany was to evacuate occupied Russian territory. But the second introduced a qualification. A special commission was to deal with the Border provinces—Poland, Lithuania, Courland, and part of Estonia and Livonia. There, said Berlin, the wish of the people had been already manifested in favour of separation from Russia and the acceptance of German protection. The Russian Government must take cognizance of such manifestations, which Germany was willing to see ratified by a plebiscite conducted without military pressure.

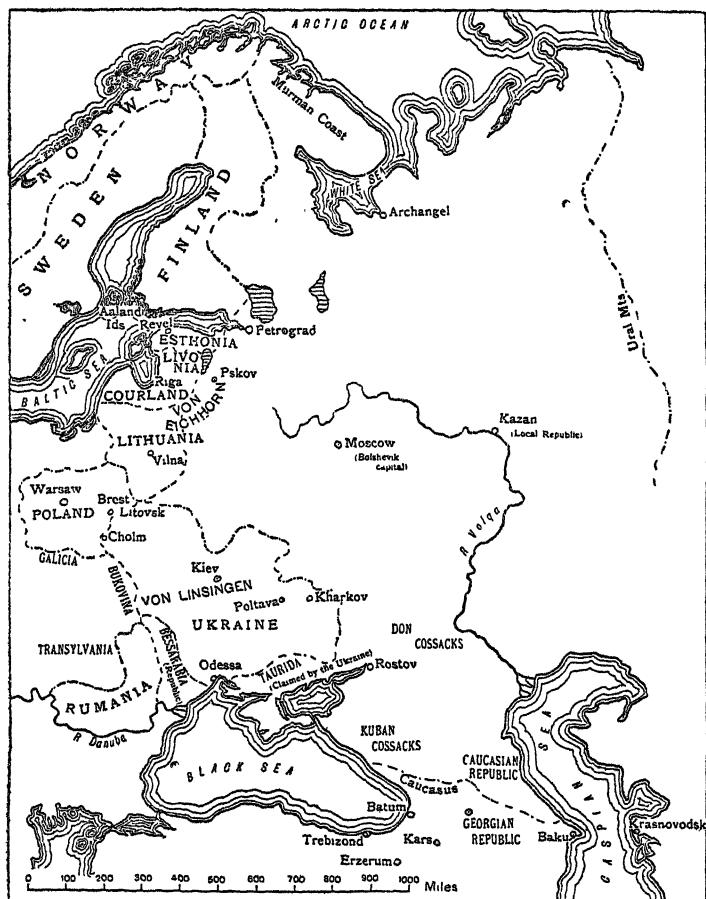
These proposals were not acceptable to the Bolshevik representatives, and still less to Bolshevik headquarters. Trotski immediately took the field. The suggestion as to the Border provinces seemed to him a defiance and an impertinence ; his vanity was wounded ; and he had an ugly feeling that he was being played with by the adroit manipulators of Berlin and Vienna. On January 2, 1918, before

the Central Committee of the Soviets, he denounced "Germany's hypocritical peace proposals," and declared that if the Border nationalities were not given the right of self-determination, the militant Revolution would stand forth in their defence. For the moment that centralism, which we have seen was part of the Bolshevik creed, was uppermost, and he was not minded to surrender any part of the Russian state either to Germany or to complete independence. To understand the situation, we must consider briefly the position of those parts of the old Russia other than the North and Centre at the beginning of 1918.

A revolution is always fissiparous. A strong central government may restore unity, but the first tendency is towards a break-up into provinces. This is especially true in the case of an inorganic realm, and Russia, as we have seen, had no real integration. "In March there had been one Russia from Poland to the Pacific; now, whether there were six or sixty, no man could tell. Republics sprang up in the night. Cities and districts proclaimed their independence. The realm of the Romanovs, of Catharine, of Peter the Great, was no more. Russia had reeled back into the dark ages." \*

Let us consider first the position of the Border states—Estonia, Livonia, Lithuania, and Courland. In Estonia a National Diet had been established by the Russian Provisional Government on the outbreak of the Revolution. It met at Reval in July,

\* *The Round Table*, March 1918, p. 273.



The Break-up of Russia.

and formed an administration; and in November, after the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, followed the example of the Ukraine, and declared an independent republic. Thereupon the Bolsheviks intervened and

dissolved the Diet ; but the provisional administration continued, and in January 1918 repeated its claim to independence. This administration represented at least 65 per cent. of the people, 30 per cent. of the remainder being Bolsheviks, and 5 the pro-German aristocracy. This last section was clamouring for the occupation of Estonia by German troops, since their great landed estates were in danger from any popular government. In Livonia, Courland, and Latvalia there had long been a movement for the union of the Lettish people as an autonomous state within the Russian Empire. After the Revolution territorial councils were established in the different districts, and a conference was held at Riga in August 1917, which demanded "a united, undivided, politically autonomous Lettland within the Russian Republic." Then came von Hutier's advance, and the occupation by Germany of large portions of Lettland, and after the Revolution Bolshevism spread rapidly in the provinces. It was from Lettish troops that the bodyguard of the Smolny leaders was drawn, and the best elements in the Bolshevik army. The country as a whole was strongly anti-German, only the nobility and the great landowners turning their eyes to Berlin. In Lithuania there was the same movement towards independence. All the Border provinces had therefore expressed by an immense majority their views as to their future, and annexation to Germany or protection under German suzerainty was sought only by a negligible fraction of territorial magnates. There was no substance in Germany's claim that the will of the Border peoples was on her side. It was not these peoples that had appealed to Germany,

but Germany unasked who had constituted herself their patron, as when von Bethmann Hollweg had proclaimed in the Reichstag that the states of the Baltic littoral, which had been "liberated" by German arms, would never again be enslaved by Russia. Though there were powerful Bolshevik elements among the Letts, nationalism was the dominant political creed—nationalism strongly flavoured with distrust of the new *régime* in Russia and fear of Teutonic encroachments.

Turn now to Poland and the Ukraine. The Regency Government of Poland, in spite of its protests, was not represented at Brest Litovsk. That unfortunate land had become a negligible quantity, and its fate was settled between Germany and Austria without its knowledge or consent. There was no unity in Polish opinion. The country was not arrayed on the side of the Russian Revolution, for her upper classes feared Bolshevism as much as they hated Prussianism. They were dependent for their existence as a class on the German sword, and it was not surprising that at the stage in which the conflict now stood Poland should be treated with scant respect. Germany was ready to use Polish territory to secure the support of any ally who was worth buying. Poland's independence had been an article of faith of the Provisional Government; her self-determination was the policy of the Bolsheviks; but her own views were variable and divided; neither Russian nor Central European; nationalist, but without any clear notion of what should constitute her nationality; opportunist, and therefore ineffectual.

It was different with the Ukraine. The people

of the "Borders" (for this is the meaning of the name), the Little Russians, who numbered twenty-five millions on Russian soil and some four millions in Galicia, had, by reason of their history, their language, and their literature, acquired a distinction from their neighbours which might almost be dignified by the name of nationality. Their aspirations had been suppressed by the old *régime* in Russia; but during the first days of the Revolution the nationalists came into the foreground. A Ukrainian Congress was opened at Kiev in April 1917, when the policy was adopted of national territorial autonomy within the future Russian Republic. The boundaries of the new state were to be the Pripet on the north, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov on the south, the Kuban River on the east, and the provinces of Lublin and Grodno on the west. A Rada, or Central Council, was formed, and, after some bickering with the Government of Prince Lvov, issued in June a manifesto of autonomy, and proceeded to act on it. They were not separatists—they claimed, indeed, to be the chief exponents of the federal idea—but they were in a hurry to get their own house in order, in view of the general confusion of the Russian Empire.

The advent of the Bolsheviks to power in November altered the position. The Ukraine was in the main an agricultural territory with a peasant population, who, in the cases where they did not own their farms, were chiefly anxious to acquire the land from the great proprietors. Only in the towns was there much intelligent nationalism. But the Bolsheviks were opposed to both

desires. As Socialists they objected to the individualist peasant proprietors, and as centralists or internationalists they had little liking for provincial chauvinism. On 20th November the *Nov. 20, 1917.* Rada issued a proclamation, transferring the land to the peasants, establishing an eight hours day, giving labour the control over industry, and defining the limits of the Ukraine republic. It was a bold attempt to forestall Bolshevism, and for the moment it succeeded. The new republic formed an alliance with Kaledin and the Cossacks of the Donetz basin, and with Rumania and Bessarabia. It occupied Odessa, and in the north and north-east around Kharkov and Rostov fought steadily with the Bolshevik troops. About the middle of December Trotski sent it an ultimatum, threatening war unless the Rada ceased to bar the passage of Bolshevik troops. The Rada replied that they could not tolerate the interference of Bolshevik elements in their national government. Trotski answered with the charge that the Ukraine was supporting the *bourgeoisie*, the Cadets and Kaledin against the sovereignty of the Soviets, and that therefore she was a foe of the Republic. Such was the situation when the Brest Litovsk Conference sat. The Ukraine had virtually proclaimed her independence, and was clamouring to be represented at the Conference as a sovereign state.

The position in Finland was peculiar. She had received her autonomy from the Russian Provisional Government, but this did not satisfy her, and she made no secret that independence was her ultimate aim. Kerenski dissolved the Finnish Diet just before he fell, and that event encouraged the people to ap-

point an administration on their own account, which in December decreed separation from Russia. The Bolsheviks tolerated the act, and the Finnish Government thereupon instituted a tour among the courts of Europe to ask for the recognition of their independence. This was granted by Scandinavia, by France, and by Germany, but by Britain only provisionally, subject to the assent of the Peace Congress. In the meantime, however, it was clear that the Finnish constitutionalists were to suffer from the neighbourhood of Russia. *Iam proximus ardet Ucalegon.* The men responsible for Finnish independence were for the most part of the Right or Right Centre, and they were opposed by extremists who cared nothing for constitutional changes and everything for social revolution. Accordingly, the strife began of Red Guards and White Guards, and the situation in the Ukraine was repeated. It appeared, therefore, most probable that these two provinces of the old Russia would never take their orders from Smolny, and that, if they negotiated with the enemy, they would do it in their own way and for their own purpose.

Rumania, as we have seen, was in desperate straits. Cut off from her Western Allies, with an implacable foe in front of her, and chaos and famine at her back, it was becoming clear that her heroic stand could be no longer maintained. She was regarded with hatred by the Bolsheviks, partly because of her steady resolution to fight, partly because of her firm handling of the revolutionary element in Sherbachev's troops, and partly because of her alliance with Bessarabia. This little province, for the most part inhabited by men of Rumanian

blood, lies between the Dniester and the Black Sea, the Pruth and the Danube. It was Rumania's only possible support, and in December the proclamation of an independent republic enabled Bessarabia to open up friendly relations with her blood brothers. The Bolsheviks, after their fashion, denounced the new state as a bourgeois government of reactionary landlords, and made it clear that at the first opportunity they would take order with both Rumania and her ally.

The rest of Russia did not for the moment come into the questions debated at Brest Litovsk. In the Caucasus there was wild confusion—Armenians, Georgians, and Tatars now moving towards union under pressure from the Turks, now concentrating on their national differences and forming embryo states. In Central Asia Moslems, Bolsheviks, and Moderates, under different names, were at variance in Siberia, in Russian Turkestan, and in the khanates of Bokhara and Khiva. In those parts Pan-Turanianism and Pan-Islamism added to the ferment, and at the beginning of 1918 he would have been a bold man who dared to forecast the future of any area between the Black Sea and the Pacific. The one certain fact was that ancient unrests had come to life again, that old political barriers had broken down, and that the poison of Europe was being blown with every wind across the Steppes. The breakdown of Russia had done for the Central Powers what they had failed to do for themselves; it had prepared for Turkey and for Germany an avenue into the forbidden land. To widen that avenue and to make sure of it for ever was, perhaps, more in the mind of Kuhlmann at Brest Litovsk

than any tinkering with the Border states. For with good luck the madness of Bolshevism might give Germany not the modest outlet on the Persian Gulf which she had long desired, but an imperial highway to the Pacific.

The position was, therefore, that in the Baltic provinces; in Finland, in the Ukraine, and, to a large extent, in the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia, the most powerful impulse was towards nationalism and independence, not towards Bolshevik internationalism. Why, then, did Trotzki make ready to dispute with Germany on this point above all others? The inconsistency of his attitude with the general creed of his party led many at the time to assume that the whole opposition was fictitious, and that the Bolsheviks, seeking peace at any price, and conscious of their weakness, desired only to save their credit by a show of independence. It is more likely that the opposition was genuine. For one thing, the Smolny leaders did not wish to estrange their Lettish troops, who, Bolshevik or no, were strongly nationalist. For another, the Bolsheviks were centralists, and, while they had little love for provincial nationalism, they had less for brazen annexations by a foreign Power. Again, Trotzki had always one eye fixed upon the German masses, whom he hoped to attract to his standard by revealing the gross imperialism of their masters. Last, and most important, the brittle vanity of Smolny had been offended. Only Lenin among the Bolsheviks was wholly logical. To Trotzki and Radek it was a bitter thing to acknowledge impotence, and they hoped by a stubborn bluff to get a better bargain.

On 4th January the period of ten days' grace expired during which the Allies were to accept or reject the offer to open peace negotiations. The Allies had treated the proposal with disdainful silence. On the 6th Trotski himself journeyed to Brest Litovsk, for the situation had become delicate. His truculence in Petrograd had impaired the good temper of his Teutonic colleagues, and his assiduous propaganda was disquieting their mind. It was necessary to temporize, especially as Kuhlmann announced with

some asperity on the 9th that, since Jan. 9. Russia's Allies had made no response, the offer to negotiate had lapsed, and implied that the universal appeal of Bolshevism was less potent than its devotees imagined. Hitherto the Bolsheviks had not talked of a separate peace; now they were compelled to disregard Russia's former Allies, and to consider a peace for Russia alone. On the

10th Trotski announced his readiness Jan. 10. to continue negotiations on this basis, though he tried to salve his dignity by declaring that, while peace was in the forefront of his programme, he would sign only a "democratic and just" peace. He was in a chastened mood, for on

the 11th he submitted to the presence Jan. 11. at the Conference of an independent delegation from the Ukraine.

On the 12th he laid on the table the Bolshevik proposals for the evacuation and reconstruction of the Russian territory now held by Germany. Two days later Germany categorically refused them. Kuhlmann declared that there could be no relinquishment of an

acre of Russian soil till a general peace had been concluded. Germany's terms were stiffening as she felt surer of her ground. She already saw a certainty of peace with the Ukraine and with Rumania, which would give her a road to the Black Sea and the East. Let that be gained, and she could deal with the Bolsheviks at her leisure. On the 16th separate negotiations were begun between the Austro-German delegates and the Ukraine, in spite of Trotski's vehement protests. The Rada was in a cleft stick, with the Red Guards beginning to press in from the east towards Poltava and Kiev. The peasant individualism and nationalism for which it stood was apparently in greater danger from Lenin and Trotski than from the Germans, so it made haste to seek support in the only quarter where help could be found. On the 18th the Conference was adjourned, and Trotski returned to Petrograd. He had stuck firmly to his demands in the case of the Border provinces, and matters had reached an *impasse*.

On the 18th the long-awaited Constituent Assembly was opened in Petrograd. It had but a brief sitting. At four o'clock on the morning of the 19th a body of Bolshevik sailors dissolved it, as Cromwell had dissolved the Long Parliament. The event shocked the Western world, which had not yet discovered the true nature of Bolshevism ; but on its declared principles the action was reasonable. Lenin and his colleagues did not believe in democracy. They stood for a class oligarchy, and to submit to the rulings of a constituent assembly was as foreign to their ideas as for a pirate to be

guided by the resolutions of the travellers whom he is plundering. From this date the odd sentimentalism about the Bolsheviks in Britain and America—it never existed in France or Italy—began to give place to a truer perception of the facts. So unsentimental a creed deserved a better fate than to be crooned over by the pacifists and humanitarians of the West. Another event helped the illumination. Two well-known moderate statesmen, Shingarev and Kokoshin, were dragged from their sick-beds by miscreants of the Red Guard and most brutally murdered. To those who were honoured by Shingarev's friendship, the death of that most wise and charitable and far-sighted of Russian patriots was the final condemnation of the Bolshevik usurpation. Madmen, drunk with blood and dogma, sat in the seat of power, and the end could only be the furies of hell.

Trotski, who had for the moment the lead among his colleagues, now struck wildly. He had presented

*Jan. 15.* an ultimatum to Rumania on 15th January, and by the 20th he heard of the coming agreement between the Central Powers and the Ukraine, news confirmed by Kuhlmann's declaration in the Reichstag on the 25th. On the 26th

*Jan. 26.* he definitely broke with the Rada, and the following day he prepared his followers for disaster by warning them that he could hold out no hope of victory or guarantee a "democratic" peace.

*Jan. 30.* On 30th January the Brest Litovsk Conference was resumed, and Trotski delivered one more impassioned appeal against both the separation of the Ukraine and the German policy towards the Border provinces. Meanwhile

the Bolshevik troops under Muraviev were winning easy victories over the scanty levies of the Rada. On the 3rd of February they took Kiev, *Feb. 3.* and put the government of the new republic to flight. The Ukraine turned in despair to the Central Powers, and on 9th *Feb. 9.* February, at Brest Litovsk, peace was signed between the two parties. The defence of the little republic was now in stronger hands than its own, and the army group of von Linsingen moved eastward along the Pripet. On the 10th *Feb. 10.* Trotski flung up his hands. He refused to sign a formal treaty, but announced that the state of war with Germany and Austria was over, and that the Russian forces on all fronts would be demobilized.

Kuhlmann was not unprepared for the situation. The Bolsheviks declined to negotiate further, and had fled to their tents ; they must be driven out of them, and forced to make a clean-cut agreement. The civilians retired, and the soldiers took command. On the plea that the Bolsheviks were using it to spread their propaganda, the armistice was suspended, and the armies of von Eichhorn were ordered to advance. A few divisions were all that was needed to secure an almost bloodless victory. The Russian front on the west, supposed to be held by Red Guards, had long been no more than “ a string of booths at which Krilenko’s democratic warriors exchanged the foodstuffs and loot plundered from Russian and Polish estates and farms for the manufactured products of Germany.” Von Eichhorn took Reval, Dvinsk, and Pskov, and came within 150 miles of Petrograd ; while von

Linsingen marched to the relief of Kiev. An ultimatum was presented to Smolny, demanding the acceptance of the German peace terms within forty-eight hours. There was no longer any talk of negotiations; the terms, far harder than those put forward at Brest Litovsk, were now dictated by the conqueror to the conquered. Trotski and Radek might have resisted, but Lenin declared for surrender, and his influence prevailed. On 24th Feb-  
*Feb. 24-* ruary the Bolsheviks capitulated, and on  
*Mar. 3.* 3rd March was signed the Peace of Brest  
Litovsk. Kuhlmann advanced from suc-  
cess to success. On 5th March a preliminary treaty  
*Mar. 5-7.* of peace was wrung from Rumania, and  
two days later a treaty with Finland was  
added to the trophies of his diplomacy.

Let us consider what these treaties gave to the Central Powers. In the Ukraine—for the moment the district most vital to Germany, and the old weapon against Russia which had been used in the past by Lithuanians, Poles, and Swedes—by the acknowledgment of an independent state it split the Russian nation, and won a gateway to the Steppe. Their immediate interest there was economic—to find a new reservoir of supplies—and by one article of the Treaty provision was made for “a reciprocal exchange of the most important agricultural and industrial products.” They obtained access to the Black Sea, which was now wholly dominated by them, and this gave them the chance of guiding the tangled affairs of the Caucasus according to their will. The Treaty with Russia stripped her of all her acquisitions since 1667. The Bolsheviks under-

took to evacuate Estonia and Livonia, the Ukraine and Finland. The districts of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum were to be handed over to the Turks. All Bolshevik propaganda was to be discontinued both in Central Europe and the new occupied territory, and the unfavourable commercial treaty of 1904 was revived. As for Rumania, she had to give up the whole of the Dobrudja, the Petroseny coal basin, and the Carpathian passes ; to demobilize her army, to promote Austro-German traffic through Moldavia and Bessarabia to Odessa, and to bind herself to certain economic concessions which were left to be settled later. Presently it appeared that these meant the complete subjection of Rumania's commerce and industry, including her oil fields, to the control of Austro-German financial groups. Finland escaped lightly, it being Germany's aim to establish there an anti-revolutionary government under her ægis. Finnish independence was recognized, and provision was made for settling the question of the Aaland islands, the strategical point of the Eastern Baltic. As for Poland, so little did national claims matter in German eyes, that the district of Cholm was lopped from her territory and transferred to the Ukraine.

And these were not mere paper' concessions. There were armies waiting to exploit them to the uttermost. Von Linsingen and von Eichhorn were pressing eastward and towards the Black Sea littoral. German troops were landing in Finland and on the Aaland Isles ; and in the Caucasus Trebizond had been occupied by the Turks, Erzerum was about to be retaken, and the whole Persian frontier was ablaze. Kuhlmann had played high, and had won greatly. He had got the nucleus of a group

of weak statelets on the Eastern marches under German suzerainty ; he had routes on both sides of the Black Sea to the oil wells of Baku, the cotton lands of Ferghana, and the old danger zone of the Indian border. He had scattered the Russian army to the winds. Alexeiev and Kaledin were at variance, and the latter was soon to die by his own hand ; the Cossacks were at the most prepared to defend their own lands, and had lost both their discipline and their spirit. He had left a fair field for the hundreds of thousands of German, Austrian, and Magyar prisoners in Siberia to organize and push Germany's interests between the Urals and the Pacific. Even now his agents were at work on this vital task. And in north and central Russia was only the foolish anarchism of Smolny, beggared of all repute and viewed with increasing detestation by a starving people. Presently the pear would ripen and fall into his hand. There seemed no chance of a revival of Russia, for she had no leaders and no soldiers to follow them. In a little Germany would intervene by request to restore order, and with it a permanent Teutonic control. His countrymen, exulting in their bloodless victories, saw the Russian menace gone for ever, and a zone of exploitation, wider than they had ever dreamed, waiting for their use. The Emperor chose to attribute the result to the valour of his troops ; but Kuhlmann, with greater justice, might claim it as the triumph of his patient skill.

But in truth he had had an easy task, for he had been opposed by babes. During the Brest Litovsk sittings enthusiasts in the West had hailed Trotski's performance as the new "democratic"

diplomacy. But the new diplomacy was only the old bluff. Ignorant alike of human nature and practical affairs, he was a plaything in the hands of his opponents. The Bolsheviks could only have succeeded had they possessed a doctrine of such compelling power that it commanded forthwith a magical assent from the whole earth. But it missed fire everywhere, except among their own war-weary and confused people. Having failed on that score, they had no other card. They could offer nothing which Germany could not take. They could threaten; but they had no power to enforce their threats, for they had begun their career by destroying their army. Lenin talked of the Peace of Brest Litovsk as like the Peace of Tilsit, under which Russia had suffered indignities that she had speedily avenged; and Trotski vapoured about raising a new army to throw off the German yoke. But you cannot preach with acceptance the folly of war and the crime of nationalism, and then extemporize in a week armies to defend an independence you have scoffed at.

Such was one side of the Bolsheviks' record. They had lost for Russia 26 per cent. of her total population, 27 per cent. of her arable land, 37 per cent. of her average crops, 26 per cent. of her railway system, 33 per cent. of her manufacturing industries, 73 per cent. of her total iron production, and 75 per cent. of her coalfields. So much for the policy of "no annexation." They had saddled themselves with a gigantic but as yet unaccessed payment by way of war tribute, and had been compelled to grant free export of oils and a preferential commercial treaty. So much for "no indemnities." They had placed

under German rule fifty-five millions of unwilling Slavs. So much for "self-determination." Their achievement in internal government was the same. Being boycotted by the educated classes, it was small wonder that they showed an unvarying record of administrative failure. Much of their policy was naked brigandage. Liberty of discussion, both in the press and in public assemblies, disappeared. Atrocities happened daily ; but, though these were officially deplored, no attempt was made to bring the criminals to trial. The houses of the well-to-do were looted with impunity ; street robberies were hourly incidents ; and, since law courts were abolished, the only check was the occasional lynching of a detected thief. State loans were repudiated, and thousands of innocent people reduced to beggary. Banks and factories were confiscated, and left to the will of ignorant workmen or the fraudulent satellites of Smolny. Taxation became a system of plunder, and immense sums were raised and squandered among Red Guards and Bolshevik officials. Churches were desecrated ; religion was officially banished from marriages and funerals ; divorce was made so easy that in Petrograd alone in two months there were 38,000 cases. Alcohol, forbidden in Russia since 1914, played its part in the chaos ; for the right of distilling spirits became a Bolshevik perquisite, and vodka was a favoured form of Bolshevik propaganda.

History will make large allowances for the Russian people in their hour of tragedy ; but on Bolshevism history has centuries ago pronounced its verdict. Its votaries had courage and single-mindedness in their purpose of destruction ; but

beyond that the most liberal apologist can hardly go. It out-faced Germany, it is true, and for a little it was anti-German ; but its creed was in essence the same as Prussianism, and, as will appear later, the two were soon to drift into a natural alliance. Both were tyrannies ; both denied the first principles of democracy, and appealed to the single arbitrament of force. They were rival Prussianisms, and between the two it is likely that the world will prefer the Teutonic brand. There is a tale in Malory that Sir Percival, riding through a forest, came upon a lion engaged with a serpent, and drew his sword to help the former as the “ more natural beast of the twain.” Of the two beasts that fought over the body of Russia the Prussian was the less unnatural.

The results of it all were grave for the Allies. At a moment when Germany had limited the active war to one single front in the West she had also won possession of supply grounds in the East, of which the potentialities were unknown. Oil, foodstuffs, and cotton would now escape the mesh of the blockade. Moreover, by her access to Central Asia, she was in a position to kindle new fires from Persia to China which the Allies would have neither the men nor the leisure to extinguish. She had won conquests which, even conceding a stalemate in the West, would leave her with the most solid and tangible profits from the war. On the other hand, the downfall of Russia had taught the world two facts which might yet be worth all the immediate disasters. It had everywhere discredited Bolshevism, and with it all crude and facile schemes of social revolution. And it had cast a high light upon

the policy of Germany, and revealed her as unchanged from the war mood of August 1914. "It is our will to conquer," her press had then proclaimed. "History will not ask us for reasons."\* The world observed that the spurious democracy of the summer of 1917 had been sloughed so soon as her prospects brightened. She had annexed shamelessly, and imposed terms of bitter humiliation and loss upon the unfortunate peoples that had fallen into her hand. Her mentality was plain, her purpose writ so large that the most stubborn German apologist among the Allies could not but read it. More than ever did the war appear as a struggle to the death between a free civilization and that which must crush it or be crushed by it, but could not be parleyed with.

At the moment Russia seemed broken beyond hope of restoration, with the spirit of her people dead or asleep. She could not raise herself, and it seemed idle to look for Allied help, with the German guns at St. Quentin opening in an implacable offensive. Yet there were not wanting certain elements of hopefulness within Russia herself. A wave of irreligion had passed over the land, and it was the fashion to say that the old power of the Church had been killed by the Revolution. But churches are hard things to kill, and with a peasantry ignorant, superstitious, and curiously responsive to spiritual appeals, a religious revival sooner or later was as certain as the process of the seasons. The Holy Synod, a creation of Peter the Great, had been abolished at the Revolu-

\* Maximilian Harden in *Zukunft*, August 1914.

lution ; but a Church Congress at Moscow in the autumn restored the Russian Patriarchate, the fifth in rank among the patriarchates of the Orthodox Church. The new patriarch, Tikhon, proved himself a man of character and courage ; and when, early in 1918, all church lands and buildings were confiscated, he retorted by launching the anathema at the Bolsheviks. There was a chance that the Russian Church might win by an appeal to the people a greater power than it had ever held as the servant of the autocracy.

But the brightest ray of light in the darkness came from an unexpected quarter. The Czechs of Bohemia, and their kinsmen the Slovaks of Northern Hungary, had clung for four centuries to their national culture. They were conscripted by the Dual Monarchy ; but their hearts were with the cause of the Slav, and whole regiments, like the 28th of Prague, had deserted to the Russian side. After the Revolution a Czecho-Slovak brigade was formed, which soon became a division, and formed the spear-point of Brussilov's last offensive. If Russia declined to fight, so would not they, and they demanded to be sent to France to continue the war. The Bolsheviks were willing that they should leave Russia, and in February two divisions were granted a passage to Vladivostok. But when peace was signed at Brest Litovsk the bulk of the Czecho-Slovak forces were in the Ukraine, and their position became desperate in view of von Linsingen's advance. Their flanks were turned, and the Germans held the railroad one hundred miles in their rear. Nevertheless they cut their way through, and, to prove their loyalty to the Government then in being, surrendered most

of their equipment to the Bolsheviks, though a single regiment of them could have taken Moscow. Then began their amazing journey eastward, betrayed time and again by Bolshevik treachery, their wounded murdered, attacked daily by Red Guards and Austro-German prisoners led by German agents. Yet they most wisely refused to fight with Russians or to meddle with Russian politics, and neither threats nor cajolery could turn them from their purpose. After fifty-six days the vanguard of this new Ten Thousand reached the sea—surely one of the most miraculous journeys in history—while other detachments remained in Western Siberia and on the road to Archangel. The news passed unnoted at the time ; but in the self-restraint, single-heartedness, and courage of the Czecho-Slovaks lay, by a fantastic decree of Fate, a hope of Russian regeneration.

## CHAPTER CLI.

### POLITICAL REACTIONS.

The New Modes of Thought—Speeches by Czernin and Hertling—The Lansdowne Letter—President Wilson's Address to Congress—The Labour Memorandum on War Aims—Demand for an Official Statement of British War Aims—Mr. Lloyd George's Statement—President Wilson's Fourteen Points—German and Austrian Replies—President Wilson's "Four Principles of Peace"—Count Hertling's Speech of February 25, 1918—Fall of Ribot Government—M. Painlevé's Administration—M. Clemenceau becomes Premier—His Character and Policy—M. Caillaux brought to Trial—Mr. Lloyd George's Position—The War Cabinet's Record for its First Year—The Ministry of Food—The Navy—Sir John Jellicoe succeeded by Sir Rosslyn Wemyss—The Air Raids on England—Formation of an Air Ministry—Criticism of the Army—Mr. Lloyd George's Paris Speech—The Versailles Council—Its Defects—Resignation of Sir William Robertson—Soldiers *versus* Civilians—The War Office—Lord Milner—The Storm breaks on the Western Front.

THE dramatic changes of fortune in the autumn and winter of 1917 could not but affect the course of politics in all belligerent countries. We have seen the reactions due to the Russian Revolution, and these were continued and intensified by Caporetto and Cambrai and the Bolshevik adventure. Two subjects above others dominated the political thought of Europe and America at the moment, and both derived their origin from the puzzlement of the world, the reversal of hopes and calculations, and the sense that the contest had

entered upon a new and more desperate phase. One was the exact war aims of the combatants ; the other the need for a drastic revision of war methods. Both inquiries had the same general purpose—a closer unity in thought and action. The struggle was now in its fourth year, and the human mind was driven to explore its purpose, with a view not only to a still far-off peace, but to the unanimity of spirit needful in alliances about to undergo a fiery trial. So also failure and hope deferred compelled an inspection of every weapon to decide if it were bright and keen enough for its task. This process of self-examination was most marked among the Allies, who for the moment were the butt of fortune ; the Central Powers had, after the spasm of unrest in July, won such confidence in the proven value of their methods that they were concerned only to use the new mood of their enemies as a means of sowing distrust among them and inspiring disunion.

But even among the Central Powers there were doubters in the general jubilation. They were chiefly found in Austria, which had long ago lost heart in the war, and was faced with the unpleasing alternatives of defeat—which meant disruption—and victory, which involved a phantom existence under German tutelage. In either case her bankruptcy was assured. Count Czernin, her Foreign Minister, had a certain hankering after emotional liberalism. He courted popularity, and showed an amiable weakness for the rhetoric as opposed to the substance of democracy. At a public dinner at Budapest early in October he gave his own views of peace, forecasting a general dis-

armament and a League of Nations, now that Central Europe had shown that it could not be subdued by force of arms. His main argument was financial—that continued expenditure on armaments on the scale which modern war demanded would mean the ruin of every state. He added that, as a pre-condition of such a golden age as he hoped for, the “ freedom of the high seas ” must be established, and the idea of economic war be banished from the world. To the Austrian Minister belonged, at any rate, the credit of divining the greatest peril which lay before the conquering Teutonic League. This was before Caporetto ; after it, on the 28th of November, *Nov. 28.* the new German Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag spoke in a different tone. Count Hertling recapitulated with serious joy the achievements of his country, and congratulated his hearers on the unanimity of all German hearts. “ Nothing can, nothing shall, be changed in the foundations of our Imperial constitution.” The war was a war on Germany’s part not of aggression but of sober and honourable defence. Brest Litovsk was soon to prove that this defence was the defence not of her frontiers but of her conquests.

On the following day a British newspaper published a letter from Lord Lansdowne, a former British Foreign Secretary, which gave *Nov. 29.* a notable stimulus to peace discussions throughout Europe. Much of it was in matter sound and indisputable ; all of it was guarded and temperate in tone. The gist of his argument was that he detected signs of a possibility of satisfactory negotiations with the enemy, provided Germany

were given guarantees on five points ; for if her peace party had such assurances they could bear down the opposition of the fanatics. The points were : that the Allies did not seek the annihilation of Germany as a Great Power ; that they did not seek to impose on her a government other than that of her own choice ; that, " except as a legitimate war measure," they did not wish to destroy Germany's commercial future ; that after the war they were willing to examine in conference the international questions concerned with the " freedom of the seas ; " that they were prepared to enter into an international pact for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. No single one of Lord Lansdowne's propositions need have aroused violent disagreement in any section of the Allies, and most were fair statements of Allied policy. But the orientation of the letter was false, though it scarcely merited the abuse which a section of the British press poured upon the writer, heedless of his age and his long record of public service. It was an echo from a past age, a vanished age of sedate diplomatic bargaining, when peace was made between combatants by a little give and take of territory and a few concessions to national pride. He did not realize that a fiery new world had come to birth, and that the " armed dogma " of Germany must win utterly or be utterly destroyed. The mischief lay less in what he said than in what he left unsaid. His tepid statement of the Allied purpose was so inadequate that it sounded to the enemy like a confession of defeat. And the mischief was increased by the use made of the aged statesman by the small and extreme pacifist section, who

were willing for their own ends to exploit this voice from a dying world which for all other purposes they rejected with scorn.

By December the public discussion of war aims was fairly launched among the Allies. President Wilson's address to Congress on 4th December, besides announcing a declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, repeated in unmistakable terms what had always been the centre of American policy, that peace could not be discussed, much less made, with the present rulers of Germany. The time for negotiations would come "when the German people have spokesmen whose word we can believe." On 11th December Mr. Asquith at Birmingham repeated this declaration with his own incomparable gift of phrase, and three days later Mr. Lloyd George dealt trenchantly with the attitude revealed in the Lansdowne letter. A peace of victory, he said, was essential for the Allies, since a true peace involved reparation by and punishment of the wrongdoers, and it was idle to expect the wrongdoer to negotiate honestly on such matters. He warned his hearers that there was no half-way house between defeat and victory, and that the danger to the State lay not in the extreme pacifists, but in the upholders of war who had grown weary by the way. But by far the most significant event of the month was the approval by a special Labour Conference of a memorandum on war aims drafted by representatives of British Labour—a memorandum subsequently accepted by an Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Conference held in London in the follow-

ing February. The Labour Party was in a favourable position to perform such a task. Unlike the other parties, it had not been drawn wholesale into the administrative machine, and it had many members, men of great ability and knowledge, who had the leisure and the aloofness to meditate upon the future. The document had some of the faults of its class. It was inclined to vagueness and wordiness, and its proposals as to the destiny of tropical Africa were scarcely within the limits of practical politics. But on the main matters it adequately expressed the sense of the Allied peoples, and it had the special merit that in the multitude of lesser aims it never lost sight of the essential purpose of the war. The performance did credit to the insight and the judgment of British labour.

The issue of this memorandum made it desirable that the British Government should follow suit with an official pronouncement. Hitherto they had not condescended to details, contenting themselves with approving the numerous manifestoes of the American President. There were some who were averse to any specification of terms, save the widest generalities, showing the traditional British distrust of political definitions. For our nation has ever been strangely disinclined to envisage the future, being, in Milton's words, "valiant, indeed, and prosperous to win a field, but to know the end and reason of winning, unjudicious and unwise." But such critics failed to distinguish between a statement of purpose in order to make the prosecution of the war more effective and an offer of terms to the enemy in order to bring the war to an end. They failed, also, to realize the

new phase on which the whole question had entered.

The overtures from the enemy—not only his official statements, but the subtler working of Kuhlmann's emissaries—had engendered a mood which demanded a clear and definite restatement of purpose. Circumstances had issued, in Necker's phrase, an "invitation to thinkers." The Allies must be united in their declared war objects as well as in their war mechanism. Again, the publication by the Bolsheviks of various secret treaties from the archives of Petrograd had proved that the temper of 1915 clashed a little with that of 1917. Those treaties provided for annexations by Italy in Dalmatia, Anatolia, and the Ægean, and by Rumania in districts scarcely Rumanian; Russia was to have Constantinople, and a free hand to annex not only German Poland but East Prussia; and there was evidence that responsible statesmen in France had considered at one time not only the return of Alsace-Lorraine, but the acquiring of German territory on the west bank of the Rhine. In 1915 such provisions had seemed justifiable in order to provide for the Allies that national security which was threatened by the Central Powers. The war had been entered upon by them for the cause of nationalism, and nationalism in the narrow sense is apt to think mainly of frontiers and territorial adjustments.

But by 1917 the Allies had come to envisage the problem otherwise. The future security of the world depended not upon any juggling with boundaries, but upon the destruction of Germany's power of offence. If the evil thing in Germany remained, no adjustment of territory would safe-

guard civilization ; if it disappeared, such adjustment fell into its proper place as a means towards the greater end, to be applied with the concurrence and goodwill of the whole world. National security was not to be won by increasing national strength for armed defence, but by decreasing the danger of attack and the power of the attacker. The change, as has already been argued in these pages, was due largely to the clear vision of America, but also in a great degree to a new phenomenon. The war had begun by strengthening nationalism, the patriotism of the homogeneous unit ; but as it continued, a certain internationalism had grown up, not as a substitute for the other, but as a creed which embraced and enriched it. Just as during the nineteenth century dynastic loyalties had given place to national loyalties, so the latter were being translated into wider aims, which to a large extent cut across existing political divisions. This movement was not hostile to patriotism, but it regarded the national ideal as not in itself adequate to meet the demands of society. Nationalism did not promise final relief from those ills of which the war was the climax ; it could not by itself remove the "covering cast over all peoples, and the veil that is brought over all nations."

Thoughtful minds throughout the Alliance were therefore inclined to put the war purpose somewhat as follows.—The anti-social, anti-national spirit of Prussianism must be broken in the field, and thus degraded and banished from the world ; but security for free development cannot be found merely in the destruction of the enemy, nor can it be won by annexations and adjustments, which involve a per-

petual armed wardenship of the marches ; it can be found only in the provision of a new international sanction to guarantee by the combined forces of civilization the rights of each unit. It will be seen that the centre of gravity had moved a long way from the secret treaties of 1915.

Hence a League of Nations was the fundamental war aim ; the rest were only machinery to provide a clean foundation for it. Unfortunately this was not fully recognized at the time by any Allied Government save America, and M. Clemenceau went out of his way on one occasion to declare the conception unbalanced and unpractical. Yet it was the only practical ideal before the world, in the sense that it was the only one which met the needs of the case. If a statement of war aims was meant to solidify the Alliance and drive a wedge between Prussianism and the German people, then a sound internationalism must be the first item in the programme. It offered the Allies an enduring union, based on co-operation instead of rivalry ; it offered the German people security for their rights of possession and development so soon as they discarded their false gods ; it offered a world weary of strife some hope of a lasting peace. In the words of the Labour Party's statement : "Whoever triumphs, the people will have lost unless an international system is established which will prevent war. It would mean nothing to declare the right of peoples to self-determination if this right were left at the mercy of new violations."

On January 5, 1918, the Prime Minister issued to the Trade Union delegates met in conference a statement, framed after consultation with Mr.

Asquith, Lord Grey of Fallodon, and the representatives of the Overseas Dominions.  
*Jan. 5, 1918.* He began by declaring what Britain was not fighting for—the destruction of Germany or Austria-Hungary, or that part of Turkey which was truly Turkish. Her aims in Europe were : the complete restoration of Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, and the occupied parts of France, Italy, and Rumania, with indemnification for losses ; the restoration to France of Alsace-Lorraine ; an independent Poland, comprising all the genuine Polish elements which desired to be included in a national state ; true self-government for the Austro-Hungarian nationalities that desired it ; and the satisfaction of the legitimate irredentist claims of Italy and Rumania. Outside Europe, she was prepared to allow Constantinople to remain the Turkish capital, provided the sea passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean were internationalized ; Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine were to be entitled to the recognition of their separate national characters ; the German colonies in Africa were to be held at the disposal of a Conference which would have primary regard to the interests of the native inhabitants. Further, there must be reparation for injuries done by the enemy in defiance of international law, especially as regards the submarine outrages. Finally, an international organization must be created to limit armaments and diminish the possibilities of war.

In substance the declaration was sound so far as it went, but it was not skilful in its phrasing or in the arrangement of its parts. The League of Nations was brought in as a tailpiece, when it

should have been the preface, since on it depended the justice of all the territorial provisions. As a means of formally codifying the Allied war aims the statement was valuable; but obviously it could have little persuasive effect on the German people, inasmuch as the various Allied demands were not organically related to a principle which would provide also for their own security. On 8th January President Wilson issued a similar document, embodying America's views in fourteen points, which were destined to hold the ground for the next year as the Allied charter.\* Jan. 8.

\* The points were :—

(1.) Open covenants of peace and no secret diplomacy in the future.

(2.) Absolute freedom of navigation in peace and war outside territorial waters, except when seas may be closed by international action.

(3.) Removal as far as possible of all economic barriers.

(4.) Adequate guarantees for the reduction of national armaments.

(5.) An absolutely impartial adjustment of colonial claims, the interests of the peoples concerned having equal weight with the claims of the Government whose title is to be determined.

(6.) All Russian territory to be evacuated, and Russia given full opportunity for self-development, the Powers aiding.

(7.) Complete restoration of Belgium in full and free sovereignty.

(8.) All French territory freed, and the wrong done by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine righted.

(9.) Readjustment of Italian frontiers on lines of nationality.

(10.) Peoples of Austria-Hungary accorded an opportunity of autonomous development.

(11.) Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro evacuated, Serbia given access to the sea, and relations of Balkan States settled on lines of allegiance and nationality.

These points were virtually the same as Mr. Lloyd George's, save that they included a reference to " freedom of navigation in peace and war," and dealt more fully with the League of Nations.

To the American manifesto Germany and Austria hastened to make answer, and during January both Count Hertling and Count Czernin discussed it in detail in public speeches. That month and the first week of February saw serious Labour unrest in both countries. There was something not unlike a general stoppage of work in Austria, and dangerous strikes at Berlin, Kiel, Hamburg, and Munich. In every case they were ruthlessly quelled with the aid of the soldiers, and in Germany the Scheidemann party took the side of the Government. But these proofs of discontent compelled the statesmen of Central Europe to walk warily, and the German and Austrian replies to President Wilson were diplomatic documents, directed as much to their own peoples as to America.

Both Hertling and Czernin welcomed effusively the President's more general provisions—such as the League of Nations, free navigation, and no economic war or secret diplomacy—declaring that in these clauses he had expressed the deepest aspirations of their hearts. To the detailed proposals they demurred. Hertling declined to talk about

(12.) Non-Turkish nationalities in the Ottoman Empire assured of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles to be permanently free to all ships.

(13.) An independent Polish State.

(14.) A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.

Russia, declaring that the Peace of Brest Litovsk was wholly a matter between Russia and the Central Powers, though Czernin suggested a compromise. As for Belgium, its forcible annexation was no part of German policy ; but its evacuation and restoration could not be undertaken till the Allies accepted the principle of the territorial integrity of the Central Powers and their allies. Hertling refused the demand for Alsace-Lorraine ; Czernin repudiated the demands as to Italy, Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro ; both declined to entertain the Turkish proposals, and both declared that Poland was a question for the Central Powers alone to consider.

On 11th February President Wilson in his address to Congress laid down four fundamental principles as the pre-conditions of peace. These *Feb. 11.* were : that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case, and must likewise contribute towards a permanent peace ; that peoples must not be bartered from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels ; that all territorial settlements must be made in the interest of the populations concerned ; and that all well-defined national aspirations must be given the fullest satisfaction, provided that in so doing no new elements of discord were introduced or old antagonisms perpetuated. On 25th February Count Hertling, in the *Feb. 25.* Reichstag, accepted joyfully the four principles, fortifying himself by quotations from St. Augustine. As it happened, he had just approved the treaties with Bolshevik Russia, Rumania, and the Ukraine, and had the audacity to claim these masterpieces of spoliation as consistent with

American ideals. The thing was so brazen, so out of tune with his speeches of January, that shrewd observers suspected a new policy. They were right, for by this time the Army Chiefs had appeared before the secret session of the Reichstag and promised Germany complete victory in the field. The Imperial Chancellor might well amuse himself at America's expense by lip service to dogmas which his actions defied ; before the autumn came Germany hoped to be beyond the need of quibbling over pedantries, and to be dictating her terms to a conquered world.

We have already seen the political events of the autumn and winter in Russia and Italy. In France it had been long apparent that M. Ribot's Ministry was losing power. It was unpopular with the Socialists ; it was not greatly trusted by the Army ;

*Sept. 7-12, 1917.* and on 7th September it placed its resignation in the President's hands. On 12th September M. Painlevé, the former Minister of War, became Premier, with a Cabinet largely formed out of the old ; the Socialists stood outside, but announced that they would support the Ministry if it merited their support. For two uneasy months M. Painlevé remained in office. He was a man of great ability and the most honest purpose ; but he failed to appeal to the interest and imagination of his countrymen, and, being a poor speaker, he signally failed in the Chamber. Early in November the situation became impossible : the Ministry fell, and the President took the bold step of entrusting M. Clemenceau with the formation of a government. On 16th November M.

Clemenceau took office, and defied the malcontent Socialists by going on his way without them. The military situation since Caporetto had become grave, and he called upon the good sense of republican France to show a steady front to the enemy. His countrymen responded with a support which no French Ministry since the outbreak of war had enjoyed, and the world was presented with the exhilarating spectacle of a man who despised party intrigue, rejected all counsels of worldly prudence, appealed, like Chatham, to the nation behind the placemen—and won.

Georges Clemenceau was at this time seventy-six years of age, and since his early youth had played a notable part in public affairs. He was the French spirit incarnate—a master of the *beau geste*, a maker and destroyer of governments, a man with an inexhaustible zest for life, brilliant, warm-hearted, catholic in his interests, and utterly courageous. He was such a figure as at the back of his heart every Frenchman loves. He could count upon this national inclination, and he could count upon the confidence of the men in the trenches. His business was to guide and encourage his country in the fiery trials he saw approaching, and not less to cleanse public life from the foul stuff which clogged the nation's effort. Ever since the Second Battle of the Aisne France had been gravely perturbed by treacherous elements in her midst—German agents who bought her press and her baser politicians, sinister figures that strove to bring the pacifism of the extreme Socialists into line with *défaitisme* in other lands, and so play the game of Berlin. Against such treason M. Clemenceau declared ruthless war.

The small fry of intrigue, like Bolo and his friends, were arrested, tried, and punished. M. Malvy, a former Minister of the Interior, under whose *régime* of complaisance the mischief had grown, was not spared, and in time found his reward in exile. But the new Premier did not strike only at underlings. M. Caillaux, the great master of the backstairs, had since 1914 been leading a strange, peripatetic life, and wherever he went mischief seemed to seed and flourish. No French Government had hitherto dared to attack this formidable personage, who held more than one political group in the hollow of his hand. But M. Clemenceau dared. In December he decided to bring M. Caillaux before a court-martial on the charge of having endangered the security of the State, and on January 14, 1918, M. Caillaux, to his immense surprise, was arrested. It was probably the most courageous political act of the war.

In Britain the position of Mr. Lloyd George was not seriously attacked. His energy, his emotional vitality, even the speed with which he made decisions only to rescind them, while perturbing sober, old-fashioned people, were not unacceptable to a nation which had an acute sense of urgent problems and but little leisure to reflect upon the best solution. The report issued by the War Cabinet on the first complete year of its work was a record of strenuous activity, not only in the prosecution of the war, but in many branches of imperial and domestic reform. If some things had been done badly, a great deal had been done well. Mr. Bonar Law, in a speech in the House of Commons

on February 13, 1918, set forth certain striking figures. In 1917 the Army had been increased by 820,645 men, and 731,000 men and 804,000 women had been placed in civil employment at home. A million additional acres had been brought under the plough. There were two million more quarters of wheat in the country than at the end of 1916. British shipyards had produced 624,000 more tons; and our ships were better used, for whereas before the war every 100 tons net of shipping brought to the country 106 tons of goods, they now brought 150 tons. Nearly two million more tons of timber had been produced at home. The number of guns available for France had increased by 30 per cent., and the supply of airplanes was two and a half times as great as in the preceding year. The War Cabinet and Mr. Lloyd George had justified their office, and though the new mechanism of government was in some respects glaringly imperfect, the ordinary citizen was not disposed to criticize it. If a machine is being used every hour of the day and night, it is difficult to overhaul and amend it. This freedom from general criticism was partly due to the Government's undoubtedly success in dealing with a matter which more than any other concerned the normal life of every household. The Ministry of Food, faced with a most vexatious and all but impossible task, had succeeded in so regulating the supply and distribution of the staple articles of diet that the winter saw little hardship and no real want. The work of Lord Rhondda and Mr. Clynes will rank as not the least brilliant in the British war record.

The chief preoccupation of the Government

during these months was with the improvement of our fighting machine, especially in the direction of a closer co-operation with our Allies. To take the

*Oct. 17, 1917.* Navy first. The destruction by the enemy on 17th October of a convoy of

twelve ships bound for Norway, under the escort of two destroyers, led to some criticism of naval methods. Sir Eric Geddes, the First Lord of the Admiralty, in his speech in the House of

*Nov. 1.* Commons on 1st November, explained

the circumstances, and made an elaborate and convincing defence of our naval policy. In December, as a result of an Allied Conference in Paris, an important step was taken by the creation of an Allied Naval Council, consisting of the various Ministers of Marine and Chiefs of the Naval Staffs, and provided with a permanent secretariat.

*Dec. 27.* On 27th December it was announced that the First Sea Lord, Sir John Jellicoe, had retired, and that he was to be succeeded by Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, who had been acting since August as Deputy First Sea Lord. The change occasioned some anxiety in the country, lest Sir John Jellicoe's great abilities and experience should be lost to the public service; though Admiral Wemyss, who had won a high reputation at Gallipoli, and had the confidence of the Navy, was admitted to be a competent successor. In the beginning of February Sir Eric Geddes, reviewing the result of twelve months of the unrestricted German submarine campaign, declared that in his opinion the danger was met. The sinkings of merchant ships had now been reduced to a lower level than before the German campaign began, and this was not due to any

decrease in the number of ships sailing. Merchant ships, too, were being built at a higher rate than in the best pre-war year, and it was hoped during 1918 to double that record year. The naval situation, therefore, at the opening of 1918, was not unfavourable, and the establishment of the Allied Council was a step in the direction of the combined use of all naval resources. The feeling still remained, however, in many quarters, that the Navy might be more used to co-operate in the Allied military plans, and before the year was many months old this demand was to be dramatically met.

The campaign in the air had produced one novel feature. The Zeppelin legend had been destroyed during 1916 ; but when on the 28th of November of that year an enemy airplane had visited London in the daytime and dropped bombs, it seemed probable that a new menace from the heavens might replace the old. In the summer of 1917 the Germans, having perfected in their Gotha type a heavy bomb-carrying machine, inaugurated a series of air raids on England. In June they came by day, and, taking us by surprise, did considerable damage. Presently we organized our defences, so that daylight raids became dangerous for the raiders ; but the first moonlight of August saw the beginning of hostile night attacks which lasted throughout the winter. Generally the enemy chose the full moon, both for the purpose of finding his way and because bright moonlight is in itself a screen ; but on at least two occasions he came when the moon was in its first or last quarter, and once he chose a moonless, starry night. At first he succeeded easily in penetrating the London defences ; but soon the

various zones of barrage became effective, and at the most one or two machines visited the capital. Bombs were dropped in every quarter of London, and rich districts suffered alike with poor. On the whole, little damage was done either to property or life ; but the normal existence of the Londoner was disarranged, and elaborate provision had to be made for shelter during raids for the poorer classes who lived in flimsy buildings. The people of South-Eastern England behaved admirably under this menace, scarcely permitting it to disturb the tenor of their life ; theatres and restaurants were full as ever ; and only the baser type of alien fled in a panic to Brighton or the Thames valley. There was no clamour to bring back machines for defence which were needed at the fighting front, and the enemy designs on British *moral* most signally failed.

In the field the superiority in the air, regained after the Battle of Arras, was well maintained. Meantime the old Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service were united in one service known as the Royal Air Force, and an Air Ministry was established in November by Act of Parliament under a new Secretary of State. The change was overdue, for the Air Services were getting into administrative confusion, and there had never been that efficiency in their home organization which had characterized their work in the field. The post of Air Minister was offered to Lord Northcliffe, who declined it ; it was ultimately accepted by his brother, Lord Rothermere.

But it was on the Army that public attention was concentrated, and the critics of the Government found there their chief topic. The heavy

casualty lists of Third Ypres, the crisis of Caporetto, the failure of hopes raised high by the first stage of Cambrai, were some excuse for those who doubted whether all was well with our military direction. It says much for the people of Britain that but little popular complaint was made against the chiefs of the Army themselves. There were the usual criticisms of the Staff ; but what Staff in what war has ever escaped them ? There was some murmur that the New Army and the Territorial Force were unfairly treated in the matter of promotion as compared with the old Regulars. There were the stock tirades against elderly generals, not unusually made by the coevals of these generals. In such complaints there was little substance. The British Army, as regards commanders and staff officers, was the youngest in Europe ; of the twenty members of the Intelligence Section at General Headquarters nine were New Army and Territorial officers ; an ex-civilian was chief staff officer to the historic Guards Division.

But by far the commonest criticism was that the politicians were overriding the soldiers and sailors. The latter are popular ; the former never have been and never will be popular in Britain. The plain man was anxious about certain appointments ; he did not quite see why a newspaper proprietor should be Air Minister and a railway manager First Sea Lord ; he was disturbed by the dismissal of Sir John Jellicoe ; he was disquieted by constant rumours of intrigues against Sir Douglas Haig and Sir William Robertson. In any controversy he was vaguely on the side of the fighting men ; and his instinct did him honour, for the

soldiers and sailors can rarely defend themselves, and the politicians have the stating of the case.

This popular anxiety was not allayed by certain acts of the Prime Minister. At the Conference of Rapallo he had been active in securing the first step in one of the most vital reforms of the war

*Nov. 12.* —the unified Allied command. But on 12th November, passing through Paris on his return journey, he made a speech in defence of this unity which contained unfortunate phrases. In particular he seemed to assent to the indefensible view that if Cadorna had received support from the Allies in August he might have cleared the road to Vienna ; \* and there were words which appeared to cast a slight on the work of the British armies in the West. The speech, nevertheless, had its value ; for it inspired France and Italy with a new fervour, and it put with a compelling power the urgent need for making an end of patchwork strategy. He returned to England to find a minor parliamentary crisis in progress, and on the 14th answered in the House of Commons the critics of the new Allied Council at Versailles. Its business, he explained, was to co-ordinate military action on the Western front by watching over the general conduct of the war, preparing recommendations for the decision of the various Governments, and keeping itself informed of their execution. It had no executive powers, and all final decisions as to movements and strategy remained with the Governments. The members were Cadorna for Italy, Foch for France, and Sir Henry Wilson for Britain.

Much had been gained, but obviously such a

\* See p. II.

Council was far from the true unity that war demands. From its inception it was placed in a dilemma. If it was to carry due weight, it should be composed of men of the calibre and with the prestige of the various Chiefs of the Staff. But these officers were engaged in the enormous task of directing the various armies, and if a less authoritative *personnel* was found the recommendations of Versailles would carry little weight. The Council began with three most distinguished soldiers, to whom General Bliss was added to represent America. But presently Foch was called away, and his place taken by General Weygand. Then Sir Henry Wilson was succeeded by General Sir Henry Rawlinson, and Cadorna by de Robilant. The result was that, while the Council continued to do admirable work, it had little purchase. There was no security that its recommendations would not be left unread or disregarded by the various General Headquarters and their Governments. Mr. Lloyd George's plea in Paris was really for a unified *executive* authority, a supreme commander who should decide upon the whole Allied strategy and have at his disposal the whole Allied reserves. But such a step was admitted by the speaker himself to be impracticable ; it was disliked by the Allied peoples and armies ; and it was very certain that it would not be taken except in the throes of a desperate crisis.

An effort was made early in February to increase the power of the Versailles representatives. On this the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff found himself compelled to resign. He was unwilling to take the post offered him at Versailles, or to continue in his old office under the new conditions.

He was succeeded by Sir Henry Wilson, who had been Deputy Chief of Staff to Sir John French in the beginning of the war, and had held various *liaison* posts with the French Army. A man of remarkable natural gifts and wide experience, he was an intimate friend of Foch, and much trusted by the French Staff—a fortunate augury for the new co-operation.

The departure of Sir William Robertson, whose massive figure had become a popular institution, raised again the cry of “soldiers *versus* politicians ;” and by a curious irony the extreme militarist theories were put forward chiefly by semi-pacifist newspapers. The strife was less between the Prime Minister and the Army chiefs than between the camp-followers on each side, and much nonsense was talked by both parties. The great figure of Sir Douglas Haig was happily uncompromised by the foolish debate. Undoubtedly the Prime Minister had given good ground for distrust by the method of some of his appointments, which savoured of intrigue ; and certain aspects of the Government’s policy—notably their slowness in handling the vital problem of man-power and their retention of too many trained divisions at home—had exasperated with good reason the much-tried High Command. But in a democratic country the relations between soldiers and statesmen must always be delicate, and it may fairly be argued that they were less strained in Britain than in either France or Italy. The War Cabinet had not interfered with Sir Douglas Haig, as Jefferson Davis interfered with Lee before Fredericksburg, or as Lincoln, with more excuse, interfered with every Northern general save Grant.

In a democracy it is the civilian Government which has the ultimate responsibility, which has to take into account a thousand matters outside the knowledge of the soldiers, and which, therefore, must decide on everything but technical details. A wise Government will trust its generals, or get rid of them ; a wise Commander-in-Chief will take the view expressed by Lee in a famous letter to Davis.\* Mr. Lloyd George was in the main justified in the claim which he made in his speech of 19th November : " No soldiers in any war have *Nov. 19.* had their strategical dispositions less interfered with by politicians. There has not been a single battalion, or a single gun, moved this year, except on the advice of the General Staff. There has not been a single attack ordered in any part of the battlefield by British troops, except on the advice of the General Staff. The whole campaign of the year has been the result of the advice of soldiers. Never in the whole history of war in this country have soldiers got more consistent and more substantial backing from politicians than they have had this year."

Yet there were causes of friction which might well have been removed. The office of Secretary of State for War existed in order to harmonize the relations of civilian statesmen and military experts. It was at the time in the charge of Lord Derby, an amiable and popular figure, but little of *April 18,* an administrator and less of a diploma-*1918.* tist. On 18th April he succeeded Lord Bertie at the Embassy in Paris, and Lord Milner

\* *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Vol. 108, p. 752.

went to the War Office. A better appointment was not made in the whole course of the campaign. Lord Milner was the foremost living British administrator, and no more powerful intellect and pure and resolute character were ever devoted to the public service. Since the War Cabinet was formed he had been its most efficient member, and had quietly borne the chief burden of all its most difficult tasks. He cared nothing for popularity and had no oratorical gifts ; but in spite of the vulgar malice with which he was still pursued by political opponents, a great confidence in him was slowly growing up in the nation. From the beginning he had had the complete confidence of the Army.

There was need of such a man in such a place. For a month before, on the 21st of March, the *March 21.* storm had broken in the West, the Allies had lost their gains of four laborious years, and the Channel Ports and Paris herself seemed to lie at the mercy of the enemy. The British Commander-in-Chief had told his men that their backs were at the wall, and that each must fight to the end ; and Sir Douglas Haig was not prone to emotional speech. We turn now to that struggle of life and death between the Oise and the sea.

## **APPENDICES**



## APPENDIX I.

---

### THE BRITISH FORCE IN ITALY.

SIR HERBERT PLUMER'S FIRST DISPATCH.

WAR OFFICE,  
*12th April 1918.*

THE Secretary of State for War has received the following Dispatch from General Sir Herbert Plumer, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., Commanding the British Forces in Italy :—

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
BRITISH FORCES IN ITALY,  
*9th March 1918.*

MY LORD,

I assumed command of the British Forces in Italy on the 10th November 1917.

I submit now a brief recapitulation of events, together with a summary of the services rendered by the various branches of the force.

The instructions I received on proceeding to Italy were :

- (a) To take command of the British Force then in course of transit to Italy ;
- (b) To report on the general situation and the number of troops required for the task before us.

I found on arrival that the general situation was certainly disquieting. The Italian Army had just received a very severe blow, from which it was bound to require time to recover and reorganize ; and although every effort was being

made to dispatch the French and British Forces to the theatre of operations, it was obvious, owing to the limited railway facilities, that some time must elapse before these forces could be regarded as a material factor.

Reconnaissances were made at once to arrange for their employment according to the number available and the development of the situation.

The Italian retreat had been arrested on the river Piave, but it was uncertain whether they would hold this line, and in the first instance it was arranged that in conjunction with the French two of our divisions should move forward on arrival to the hills north and south of Vicenza, where a stand could certainly have been made.

The forward march was well carried out. The marches were necessarily long, as time was, or might have been, all important. The troops everywhere met with an enthusiastic reception from the inhabitants.

By the time we had reached the above position the general situation had improved, and we accordingly made an offer in conjunction with the French to take over sectors in the foot-hills of the Asiago plateau, which would have placed us in a strategically sound position to withstand attack either from the north or north-east. At this stage, however, snow was imminent, and it was considered by the Italian High Command that our troops would suffer considerable losses and hardships from the cold in the hills, especially as they were unaccustomed to such warfare, and there were many difficulties in providing the special mountain equipment necessary, and it was suggested that we should instead take over the Montello sector with the French on our left; to which we agreed.

The Montello sector is a feature by itself, and an important one. It acts as a hinge to the whole Italian line, joining as it does that portion facing north from Mt. Tomba to Lake Garda, with the defensive line of the river Piave covering Venice, which was held by the Third Italian Army.

There is no doubt that the entry of French and British troops into the line at this time had an excellent moral effect, and it enabled the Italians to withdraw troops to train and reorganize.

• There were at this time several German divisions east of the river Piave, and it was quite likely that an attack to force that river and capture Venice was in contemplation. We took over the line on 4th December, and at once got to work to organize the defences in depth, keeping as large a reserve as was possible in hand in case of unforeseen eventualities occurring in other portions of the line. Such did occur, as the enemy commenced to develop local attacks on the Grappa and Asiago sectors, first in one and then in the other, assisted undoubtedly by German batteries. These attacks fell principally on the First and Fourth Italian Armies, who fought well; and though they had a good number of casualties themselves, they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

December was an anxious month. Local attacks grew more frequent and more severe, and though the progress made was not great and Italian counter-attacks were constantly made, yet the danger of a break through into the plains undoubtedly increased.

The general impression conveyed by these attacks was that the Austrians were being encouraged to persevere with their attacks in the hope of getting down into the plains for the winter, and that the German divisions were being kept in reserve with the intention of concentrating them at short notice to force home an attack should opportunity offer.

Rear lines of defence were constructed under our supervision, and as time passed and preparations became more forward the general atmosphere of security improved. This was increased by the attempt of the Italians to recapture Mt. Asolone on 22nd December, which resulted in the southern slopes being again in Italian hands. The following day, however, the pendulum again swung to the Asiago, as the enemy captured Mt. Melago and Col Rosso. The Italians

retook the former by counter-attack. Christmas Day found us, therefore, with the situation both on the Grappa and Asiago serious, the latter the more so; but the Italians, though suffering from prolonged strain and cold, were offering a stubborn resistance.

From this time the situation gradually improved. The French carried out a brilliant attack on 30th December in the Mt. Tomba sector, resulting in the capture of over 1,500 Austrian prisoners. British artillery assisted in this operation.

During all this period we had carried out continuous patrol work across the river Piave and much successful counter-battery work. The Piave is a very serious obstacle, especially at this season of the year, the breadth opposite the British front being considerably over 1,000 yards and the current 14 knots. Every form of raft and boat has been used, but wading has proved the most successful; but the icy cold water made the difficulties even greater. In spite of this there has never been any lack of volunteers, both officers and men, for these enterprises.

On 1st January our biggest raid was carried out by the Middlesex Regiment. This was a most difficult and well-planned operation, which had for its objective the capture and surrounding of several buildings held by the enemy to a depth of 2,000 yards inland, provided a surprise could be effected. Two hundred and fifty men were passed across by wading, and some prisoners were captured; but, unfortunately, the alarm was given by a party of 50 of the enemy that was encountered in an advanced post, and the progress inland had, therefore, in accordance with orders, to be curtailed. The recrossing of the river was successfully effected, and our casualties were very few. An operation of this nature requires much forethought and arrangement, even to wrapping every man in hot blankets immediately on emerging from the icy water.

The Third Italian Army also opened the year well by clearing the Austrians from the west bank of the Piave about

Zenson. This was followed on 14th January by the attack of the Fourth Italian Army on Mt. Asolone, which, although not entirely successful, resulted in capturing over 400 Austrian prisoners.

The situation had by this time so far improved that I offered to take over another sector of defence on my right in order to assist the Italians. This was agreed to, and was completed by 28th January. On this day and the following the First Italian Army carried out successful operations on the Col Del Rosso-Mt. Val Bella front, on the Asiago plateau. The infantry attacked with great spirit, and captured some 2,500 Austrian prisoners. British artillery took part in the above operation.

Since the beginning of February the weather has become bad, a considerable amount of snow has fallen, and visibility has been poor, which has interfered considerably with air and artillery work.

It is certainly the case that the general situation on the Italian front has gradually but steadily improved during the four months which have elapsed since the British Force was sent there, and although we have not taken part in any serious fighting, I think we can fairly claim to have had some share in this improvement.

The work of the R.F.C. under Brig.-General Webb-Bowen during the period under review has been quite brilliant. From the moment of arrival they made their presence felt, and very soon overcame the difficulties of the mountains. They have taken part in all operations, and rendered much assistance to the Italians in the air. They have carried out a large number of successful raids on enemy aerodromes, railway junctions, etc., and have during the period destroyed sixty-four hostile machines, a large proportion of which were German, and nine balloons; our losses to the enemy during the period being twelve machines and three balloons—a record which speaks for itself.

The Artillery has rendered very useful service. Our

gunners soon became accustomed to the altered conditions, and carried out many successful destructive shoots. A comparison of the photographs of hostile battery positions when our artillery entered the line with the positions now occupied shows that the enemy batteries have been successfully forced back almost throughout the whole front. Some British Artillery assisted both in French and Italian operations, and a frequent interchange of British and Italian batteries was made, together with Counter Battery Staff Officers, in order that experience of each other's methods might be gained. Every effort was made to illustrate the value of counter-battery work, the value of which we had learned by experience in France, but which the Italians had not hitherto fully appreciated.

The Italians were only too anxious to profit by any experience we could give them, and this was done not only by frequent interchange of visits of Commanders and Staffs to the various sectors of defence, but by the establishment of Schools of Instruction at which a large number of Italian officers actually underwent the courses. About 100 Italian officers attended the courses at the various schools, together with some French officers. Similarly British officers underwent courses at French and Italian schools.

The organization of the Intelligence Service in Italy has been carried out very satisfactorily. The adaptation of Italian maps and means of interchange between Italian and British batteries also entailed much work.

The close co-operation between the Artillery, Intelligence, and R.F.C. under conditions strange to previous experience was entirely satisfactory.

The organization of the Lines of Communication was very well carried out by Lieut.-General Sir H. Lawson, K.C.B. The various Base Depôts, Hospitals, and Convalescent Camps have been well arranged, and are in thoroughly good working order. The Medical and Sanitary Services have been well organized. The policy of establishing General and Stationary

Hospitals at Genoa and on the Riviera worked well, as the effect of these hospitals in such a good climate naturally tended to early recovery.

The health of the troops has been excellent, and the casualties slight. The men felt the cold considerably during the winter, but I am convinced that they have benefited much from the change after the severe fighting they had had in France.

The conduct of the troops has been excellent. They have been very well received everywhere, and have themselves set the high standard expected of them.

I cannot speak too highly of the kindness we have received from the Italian authorities, with whom we established most cordial relations. Everything possible was done to help us. The provision, employment, and maintenance of the Force have entailed a considerable amount of work between the Allied Staffs, and this had been conducted throughout in complete harmony.

We are all much indebted to His Excellency General Diaz, Chief of Staff, Royal Italian Army ; and to the Staff of the Italian High Command, and to the Commanders and Staffs of the various Armies, and to the Liaison Officers, Colonels Ragioni and Gloria, with my Headquarters, who have given us every assistance ; as also to Generals Fayolle and Maistre, who commanded the French troops during the period, and with whom we worked in the closest association ; and Commandant De Massignac, French General Staff, at my Headquarters, has been especially useful to me.

I have received the greatest assistance throughout from Brigadier-General Delme-Radcliffe, C.B., C.M.G., C.V.O., head of the British Mission in Italy, whose knowledge of Italian and the Italian Army has been of great value to me.

I feel that the close alliance and interchange of ideas and methods between the three Allied Forces cannot fail to have produced beneficial results.

I shall have an opportunity of bringing to your Lordship's

## APPENDIX I.

notice the names of the officers of the Force who rendered service of value, but I would like to make a special reference to Major-General C. H. Harington, C.B., D.S.O., the Chief of the General Staff, to whom is due the fact that all the varied and frequently difficult Staff problems were solved, and that complete harmony prevailed between all the Allied Staffs throughout the whole period.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

HERBERT PLUMER, General,  
Commanding British Forces in Italy.

## APPENDIX II.

---

### EVENTS IN MESOPOTAMIA AFTER THE CAPTURE OF BAGHDAD.

SIR STANLEY MAUDE'S SECOND DISPATCH.

WAR OFFICE,  
*10th January 1918.*

THE Secretary of State for War has received the following Dispatch, addressed to the Chief of the General Staff, India, by Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude, K.C.B., late Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force :—

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
MESOPOTAMIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
*15th October 1917.*

SIR,

1. I have the honour to submit herewith a report on the operations carried out by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force during the period extending from 1st April to 30th September.

2. My previous dispatch included a narrative of the operations subsequent to the fall of Baghdad up to 31st March, by which date our Columns had driven the enemy north-east, north, and west in divergent directions, along the Dialah, Tigris, and Euphrates respectively, and our advanced troops had established a screen covering Baghdad, being disposed

## APPENDIX II:

approximately on the line Shahraban-Dogameh-Mushaidie-Beluja. In order, however, to provide for the security of Baghdad, which is an open city devoid of means of defence, it seemed desirable to prosecute our operations against the shattered but reinforced Columns of the 18th Turkish Corps, with which we had been so recently engaged, whilst keeping careful watch on the movements of the 13th Turkish Corps, which was falling back before our Russian Allies, lest the enemy should detach troops from this direction against the right flank and rear of our movement towards Samarrah. The pressure applied by the Russian Columns which had already reached Karind with advanced troops at Khanikin, assisted by our troops operating in the Jebel Hamrin, as described in my last dispatch, now forced the enemy to cross the Dialah and continue his retreat on Kifri.

3. On 2nd April we effected a junction with General Baratoff's troops about Kizil Robat, and as soon as these were well established on the line of the Dialah our Column in this vicinity—having served the double purpose of harassing the retreat of the Turks and joining hands with the Russians—was withdrawn. This enabled us to resume our operations along both banks of the Tigris, which had been temporarily suspended.

4. On the 6th our Cavalry moved forward to the vicinity of Deli Abbas with instructions to cover our right flank, and by delaying action to draw on gradually any movement initiated by the 13th Turkish Corps towards the Tigris. On the left bank of the Tigris it seemed wiser not to commit our troops to definite action until such time as the intentions of this Turkish Corps became clearer. On the right bank of the Tigris the enemy's force was estimated at 4,000 rifles with 200 sabres and 16 guns, and these were holding Harbe with advanced troops about Beled Station. On the 8th our troops moved forward to attack the enemy's position covering Beled Station, and good progress was made until they came under close machine-gun and rifle fire, from some rising ground in

that vicinity. The 51st Sikhs were ordered to secure this point, and making good use of the broken ground and well supported by artillery, they established themselves there without difficulty and pressed forward beyond. The enemy holding the station now found his position untenable, and soon his whole line was in retreat. Our losses were slight, but the enemy, in addition to his battle casualties, lost 200 prisoners, including nine officers as well as three machine guns and some rolling stock. On the 9th Harbe was occupied, and here a pause was ordered in order to allow for further operations on the left bank of the Tigris.

5. Our troops on the left bank had driven several parties of the enemy across the Shatt El Adhaim on the 7th, and on the following day a close reconnaissance of this river was carried out with a view to bridging it. It now became evident, however, that the 13th Turkish Corps from Jebel Hanrin and the 52nd Division of the 18th Turkish Corps on the line of the Shatt El Adhaim were contemplating a converging movement against our troops on the left bank of the Tigris. The 2nd and 14th Turkish Divisions, some 6,000 rifles strong, with 250 sabres and 32 guns, moving down the right bank of the Nahr Khalis Canal towards Deltawa, had by the evening of the 9th reached a point some seven miles south-west of Deii Abbas. On the following day our Cavalry, falling back under instructions, continued to draw them on, whilst our Horse Artillery inflicted substantial casualties on their marching Columns, and by the evening they had reached Arab Bu Abin; but the 52nd Division remained stationary on the line of the Shatt El Adhaim. On the 10th the enemy was reported to be entrenching, but on the 11th he continued his advance, moving in dense columns with his left on the Nahr Khalis. To meet this movement and to support our Cavalry we had detached troops from Deltawa up the right bank of the Nahr Khalis Canal towards Deli Abbas, whilst another Column, leaving sufficient troops to contain the enemy on the Shatt El Adhaim, fell upon his right flank after a night march from

## APPENDIX II.

Dogameh. This attack, resolutely pressed by two Welsh battalions and the Wiltshires, was a complete surprise, and before the enemy could recover himself heavy casualties were inflicted on his Columns by our well-handled artillery and by rifle fire. Low visibility owing to mirage, and the absence of water, hindered our operations, but the enemy was soon in retreat, and by 7 p.m. he had regained Arab Bu Abin.

During the early hours of the 12th the enemy continued his retreat, followed by our infantry patrols, and in the darkness touch with him was lost. At 7 a.m. the Cavalry was ordered in pursuit, and at midday located him 6 miles west-south-west of Deli Abbas, covered by an entrenched rearguard. The Turks were now fighting a stubborn rearguard action, and this continued throughout the 13th and 14th, our progress being continuous but slow. Our Cavalry essayed a wide enveloping movement round the enemy's right flank, so as to gain the Kifri Road ahead of him; but his right flank refused to the foot of the Jebel Hamrin, and lack of water prevented them from reaching their objective. During the night of the 14th/15th the enemy continued his retreat on Kifri, and by midday on the 15th our patrols\* had entered Deli Abbas, where the pursuit was stopped, as it was not intended to follow the enemy into the Jebel Hamrin, since the advantage of position would there have rested entirely with the defence. Over 300 of the enemy's dead were buried, and 1 gun and 80 prisoners were captured by us.

Having disposed of the 13th Turkish Corps temporarily, it was now decided to force the passage of the Shatt El Adhaim and deal with the detachment of the 18th Turkish Corps still holding it. These operations commenced early on the 18th, and by 6.30 a.m. our troops were sufficiently established on the right bank to allow of a bridge being thrown across the river. The channel was narrow but full of quicksands, and these caused delay; but at 11.40 a.m. the bridge was completed, and by 2 p.m. our infantry had cleared the loop of the river, and were moving towards the Barura peninsula. The Turkish

opposition had collapsed, prisoners were coming in, and a composite Cavalry Brigade moved forward in pursuit. This Brigade, skilfully handled, pushed on resolutely, and, in spite of heat and want of water, succeeded in turning the enemy's retreat into a rout. His casualties in killed and wounded were heavy, and 1,300 prisoners—of which 26 were officers—and 6 machine guns were captured. Indeed, only a small fraction of the troops opposed to us that day effected their escape. In this action an Indian Cavalry Regiment, the Horse and Field Artillery Batteries, and four Lancashire Battalions specially distinguished themselves.

6. On the 19th the Tigris was bridged at Sinijah, and river-head was moved up to that place. The enemy's opposition on the left bank having been completely destroyed, a further advance was now ordered on the right bank. The Turks were holding a position about Istabulat, facing south-east, with their left resting on the river and extending over a frontage of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles across the Dujail Canal to the Baghdad-Samarrah railway. After crossing that railway their line bent back sharply, and continued more or less parallel with the railway track to a point west of Istabulat Ruins, a distance of over 3 miles. The Dujail Canal, diagonally situated to our advance, was a considerable obstacle, with banks 40 feet high in some places, and containing water 6 feet deep and 20 to 25 feet broad, and its banks had been prepared in places so as to bring enfilade fire to bear upon the ground south of it. Two redoubts north of the Canal were prominent features in this section of the defence, and immediately in rear of the Turkish left centre was a group of mounds affording good positions for machine guns. The position was a strong one, and was held by some 6,700 rifles with 200 sabres and 31 guns, whilst in the vicinity of Samarrah were reserves consisting of some 4,000 rifles with 500 sabres and 15 guns. The enemy's left and left centre were selected as the point of attack, and on the 20th his covering troops were driven in and an advanced line established to render it possible for our

artillery to be brought forward and for the Canal to be bridged. At 5 a.m. on the 21st his position on the north side of the Canal was resolutely attacked by the Black Watch and 8th Gurkhas, under a creeping barrage, and both battalions made steady progress. In spite of a hot rifle and machine-gun fire from the main position the redoubt near the river was captured, and the garrison made prisoners. The other redoubt on this side of the Canal was assaulted, recaptured by the enemy, and finally secured by us, thus giving our troops a good foothold in this part of the enemy's defences. At 6.30 a.m. an attack by the Seaforths and 28th and 92nd Punjabis was launched south of the Canal. This advance was carried out with fine dash and gallantry across 2,000 yards of ground, devoid of cover, and by 7.25 a.m. the enemy's front line, some 700 yards long, was in our hands. Consolidation proceeded, and in spite of several counter-attacks all gains were held. Reconnaissances were made with a view to a further advance, but they indicated that further progress without reorganization and careful preparation, which would only be possible under cover of darkness, would be needlessly costly. It was decided, therefore, to devote the remainder of the day and night to establishing ourselves securely and preparing for a simultaneous attack on both sides of the Canal, to be carried out next morning. A counter-attack by the enemy during the afternoon was dispersed by gun and rifle fire, and his artillery was active through the afternoon.

Early on the 22nd our patrols reported that the enemy opposite our right was beginning to withdraw, and by 4.30 a.m. the whole of the position had been evacuated, and was then occupied by us. The natural and artificial strength of the position now became apparent, and the number of enemy dead testified to the tenacity with which it had been held. Our troops moved forward in pursuit at daybreak, and were in contact with the enemy's main body in the vicinity of Istabulat Police Post by noon, where his defensive system consisted of detached groups of trenches partially completed.

The heat was great, and the attack was postponed till the evening, when the assault, aided by concentrated artillery fire, was delivered in dashing style by the Leicesters, supported by the 51st Sikhs and 56th Rifles, and the defence was easily penetrated. The attacking troops pressed on relentlessly and rapidly some 1,200 yards further, and the enemy's guns were only withdrawn just in time to avoid capture. The Turks rallied and put in a series of counter-attacks, with which our supporting troops dealt; but the enemy maintained a heavy fire until 8 p.m., when he retreated on Samarrah. This attack had been considerably aided by artillery fire from a Column detached along the left bank of the Tigris to co-operate. During the day a regiment of Indian Lancers made a spirited attempt to break through the line of trenches, and, supported by artillery fire, it captured the front Turkish trench, but its advance was finally checked by fire from other trenches in rear. Our captures on the 21st and 22nd amounted to 20 officers and 667 other ranks taken prisoners, 14 Krupp guns, 1 5.9 in. gun damaged, 2 machine guns, 16 engines and 240 trucks, 2 barges, many rifles, and much ammunition and equipment.

At 10 a.m. on the 23rd Samarrah Station was secured, the enemy offering no further resistance and retreating on Tekrit; and on the 24th Samarrah Town, on the left bank, was occupied and a post established there.

7. Whilst these operations were in progress on the right bank, it became evident that the 13th Turkish Corps was once more moving forward from the Jebel Hamrin, but this time down the Shatt El Adhaim, against our forces on the left bank of the Tigris, and the latter were accordingly readjusted to deal with the new situation. At 5 p.m. on the 23rd his leading echelon, estimated at 2,000 rifles, with 9 guns, had reached Duhaba, with his second group 17 miles in rear. The chance of defeating him in detail was thus offered, and orders were issued for a night march, culminating in an attack at dawn next day on his advanced troops. The infantry were to attack

Duhaba, whilst to the Cavalry, moving wide to the north, was assigned the mission of intercepting any Turkish forces moving up in support. Our right came in touch with the Turks soon after daybreak, and the action developed rapidly. As the pressure from our left began to be felt the Turks gave way, crossed the river, and retired rapidly up the left bank towards the remainder of their force, and in doing so presented good targets for artillery and machine-gun fire to our Cavalry. This attack had been gallantly delivered by several Lancashire battalions, and as a result about 100 Turks were buried by us and 150 prisoners fell into our hands.

On the morning of the 25th aeroplanes reported the Turks as retiring up both banks of the river, and our troops moved forward in pursuit. By the evening of the 27th they had reached Satha Ruins, being in touch with the Turkish rear-guard covering withdrawal to and occupation of a selected position in the foothills of the Jebel Hamrin, and on the morning of the 28th we occupied a line within two miles of the enemy's position. Heat, low visibility, and engine trouble had all combined to handicap reconnaissance by land and air, so that the situation still remained somewhat obscure, and during the night of the 28th/29th a violent dust storm arose, which continued intermittently for 48 hours.

Briefly put, the plan adopted was to throw our weight on the 30th up the left bank of the Shatt El Adhaim against the enemy's weaker flank and more shattered division, and then turning north and west to drive him away from water and his line of retreat. From dawn till 7 a.m. the dust storm abated, and our attack on the left bank, developing at 5 a.m., was brilliantly carried out by the Cheshire and South Wales Borderers over 1,000 yards of level plain, and was immediately successful. By 8 a.m. all objectives had been reached, including the village of Adaim, and the retreating Turks were being engaged at long range, whilst a number of prisoners were already in our hands. Two of our companies, however, which had lost nearly all their officers, advanced too far in

pursuit. For a moment they captured two batteries, a section of machine guns, and many prisoners; but whilst still out of touch with the remainder of our force they were counter-attacked and isolated. They maintained a gallant hand-to-hand fight for some time, but few of them survived. This counter-attack, assisted by the configuration of the ground, and the dust storm which was now raging, enabled the enemy temporarily to regain the village of Adaim; but, checked here by artillery and machine-gun fire, he was unable to debouch, and was ultimately driven out again by 11 a.m., and our infantry firmly re-established themselves in the village. The Turks, aided by a continuance of the dust storm, strengthened their left and secured their line of retreat to the north-east; but towards evening the dust storm died down, and the enemy's second line trenches, his transport, his horse lines, and his artillery north-east of the village of Adaim were shelled with good effect. Our troops bivouacked on the ground won and pushed forward patrols to maintain touch with the enemy; but during the night he withdrew, and at 6.45 a.m. on 1st May our aeroplanes reported him in retreat 7 miles away. In the action on the 30th the enemy suffered heavily in casualties, and our captures included 365 prisoners, 1 Hotchkiss gun, 1 machine gun, and rifles, equipment and all kinds of ammunition, whilst 214 enemy dead were buried by us. During this period of hard marching and heavy fighting the Buffs specially distinguished themselves on several occasions.

8. As a result of the fighting during the month of April the enemy's 13th and 18th Corps had been driven back on divergent lines, the former into the Jebel Hamrin and the latter to Tekrit. The 13th Corps had twice taken the offensive, with results disastrous to itself, and the 18th Corps had been defeated and driven from its selected positions on four occasions. Our total captures for the month amounted to some 3,000 prisoners and 17 guns, besides a considerable quantity of rolling stock and booty of all kinds. The objec-

tives which we had set out to reach had been secured and the spirit of the enemy's troops was broken. The fighting carried out during this month had imposed a severe strain upon the troops, for the heat, the constant dust storms, and the absence of water on occasions, tested their stamina very highly. But as conditions became more trying the spirit of the troops seemed to rise, and to the end of this period they maintained the same high standard of discipline, gallantry in action, and endurance which had been so noticeable throughout the Army during the operations which led up to the fall of Baghdad and subsequently.

9. The increasing heat now rendered it necessary that the troops should be redistributed for the hot weather, and that every provision possible under existing conditions should be made with a view to guarding against the trying period which was rapidly approaching. Whilst it was necessary to hold the positions which had been so bravely won and to strengthen them defensively, the bulk of the troops were withdrawn into reserve and distributed in suitable camps along the river banks, where they could obtain the benefit of such breezes as were available, and where a liberal supply of water for drinking, bathing, and washing was obtainable.

For the remaining five months of the period under review the heat was considerable, and during the latter part of June, July, and beginning of August it was intense. Consequently movements could not be undertaken by either side without grave risk of incurring substantial casualties from heat stroke and heat exhaustion. The troops enjoyed a well-earned respite from the continuous fighting in which they had been engaged during the five months terminating in April, but they were by no means idle. Our hold over the area was made secure, defensive positions and pivots were prepared, and training was carried on in the early mornings and late evenings as the temperature permitted. Manly sports, too, which are so essential to the well-being of the soldier, especially when temporarily inactive in the military sense, were freely indulged

in, with beneficial results to the health and future fitness of the Army for service in the field. Arrangements had been made for a proportion of the troops to proceed to India on leave during the summer months, and those who had been on service for a considerable time derived much benefit from the change and rest thus obtained.

10. Early in June a communication was received from our Russian Allies to the effect that in consequence of the increasing heat they had found it necessary to evacuate the line of the Dialah River, and they subsequently withdrew beyond Karind towards Kermanshah. This rendered the occupation of Beled Ruz by us necessary, and this was carried out on the 23rd.

For some time after our occupation of Baghdad tribesmen on the upper reaches of the Dialah, Tigris, and Euphrates, above Baghdad, were restless, and it was found necessary to take punitive measures against them. Columns for this purpose operated on the Euphrates from 3rd to 10th May, on the Tigris from 16th to 24th May, and on the Dialah from 2nd to 8th June, and 28th June to 3rd July. In each case salutary punishment was meted out to the delinquents. Consequent upon these measures the situation became quiet on each river line, and the tribesmen have, generally speaking, remained peacefully disposed except in the case of the operations against Ramadie referred to below, when the refractory elements were again severely dealt with.

It now seemed desirable to increase our hold on the Euphrates line still further, and it was consequently decided early in July to occupy Sinn El Zibban, some commanding ground on the right bank of the Euphrates about twelve miles up stream of Feluja, which dominates the left bank of that river at its junction with the Saklawie Canal. As this advance on our part would bring our right bank detachment within striking distance of Ramadie, where the enemy was located, the opportunity seemed favourable for attacking him with a view to covering our movement. The enemy's troops at

Ramadie, who occupied an entrenched position covering Ramadie from the east and south-east, were estimated at 1,000 rifles with 100 sabres and six guns, besides some 2,000 Arabs of the Delaim tribe.

On the 8th Sinn El Zibban was occupied, and by the 10th the Column destined to attack Ramadie was concentrated there. Careful reconnaissances of the approaches to Ramadie had already been carried out, and motor vans and lorries were allotted to carry a proportion of the troops as necessary, and thus minimize the amount of marching to be done in view of the heat then existing. Special provision was also made for water and for ice. After a night march the Column was in touch with the Turks east of Ramadie by 4 a.m. on the 11th, and by 8.15 a.m., after considerable opposition, our troops had driven in the enemy's advanced troops, and were preparing for the final assault against his main position. But a blinding dust storm now sprang up, and this, added to the fact that this day marked the commencement of an abnormal heat wave, rendered the position of the troops more and more difficult as time went on. Observation became almost impossible, and the interruption of our communications—both wireless and land line—by unlucky circumstances rendered co-ordination of measures for the attack impracticable. It was therefore decided to cancel the order for the attack; but the troops remained in their advanced positions throughout the day, and were withdrawn during the night of the 11th/12th to the river bank about MuShaid, where shade was available, but whence they still continued to contain the Ramadie position. On the 12th the heat wave was still increasing, and consequently further operations against Ramadie were deemed impracticable; but the troops remained confronting the Turks, as there were indications that the latter were meditating retreat. As these indications did not materialize, the forces withdrew to Sinn El Zibban on the 14th, this movement being methodically and well carried out, and some 1,500 tribesmen who followed up the rearguard were severely handled by our Artillery and

Light Armoured Motor Batteries. The troops throughout the operation evinced a soldierly spirit, and inflicted on their opponents severe battle casualties which considerably exceeded their own.

On the Dialah front our aeroplanes reported early in August that the Turks were entrenching a position south-west of Shahraban, and this was confirmed by reports received locally. It was therefore decided to occupy Shahraban without further delay, and for this purpose converging columns were dispatched from Beled Ruz and Baqubah on the night of the 18th/19th. On the 19th Misdad was seized at dawn, and on the 20th Shahraban was occupied with slight opposition, the enemy retiring hastily into the Jebel Hamrin. A new line was at once established and consolidated without interference on the part of the enemy.

II. Plans were now maturing for the capture of Ramadie, the garrison of which had been reinforced as a result of the operations in July, but the distance from Baghdad and the bad state of the communications between these two places rendered this matter one of considerable difficulty. Very careful preparations were necessary before these operations could be carried out, and it was 26th September before a column of adequate size could be concentrated within striking distance of Ramadie for this purpose.

The enemy held an advanced position four miles east of Ramadie on Mushaid Ridge, which runs north-and-south, and rises some 60 feet above the plain. To the north of the ridge lies the Euphrates River, and to the south the salt Habbaniyah Lake. The Turkish main position was semicircular in outline, and was sited about one mile to the east and to the south of Ramadie. The eastern front ran along but behind the Euphrates Valley Canal, and the southern front across bare sandy downs extending from the Euphrates Valley Canal to the Aziziyeh Canal, which leaves the Euphrates one mile west of Ramadie and flows southwards. The plan of operations was to turn the southern flank of the Mushaid Ridge,

secure a crossing over the Euphrates Valley Canal, and attack Ramadie from the south with the bulk of the column, whilst the cavalry operating west of the Aziziyeh Canal threw themselves across the enemy's communications with Hit by blocking the Aleppo Road. Steps were taken to induce the enemy to expect the main attack against his left on the Euphrates, and with this intent the river was bridged at Madhij and a road was constructed thence up the left bank, whilst supplies were also collected there. The distribution of the troops until the night of the 27th/28th was also designed to give colour to such a movement.

At 6 p.m. on the 27th two infantry columns with the cavalry moved from Madhij to the position of assembly some 5 miles in front of our outposts, and the infantry subsequently made a night advance some 2 miles in a westerly direction to a position of deployment, whence an attack on Mushaid could be delivered at dawn. An infantry detachment also skirted the northern edge of Lake Habbaniyeh, and before daybreak on the 28th had secured important tactical features on and behind the southern flank of the Mushaid position, including a dam across the Euphrates Valley Canal, passable by all arms. This action compelled the enemy to withdraw from Mushaid Ridge, which he shelled heavily subsequently in expectation of its occupation by our troops; but in this he was disappointed, as our infantry moved south of the ridge and crossed the dam. At 7 a.m. the cavalry were transferred from our right to our left flank, their march being screened from the enemy by Mushaid Ridge. They crossed the Euphrates Valley Canal by the dam and pushed westwards across the Aziziyeh Canal to a position astride the Aleppo Road, so as to cut off the enemy's retreat. Meanwhile, to the west of the Euphrates Valley Canal, our left infantry column advanced against the enemy's southern front, and occupied and consolidated a position under considerable opposition. In this attack the Dorsets and 5th Gurkhas especially distinguished themselves. Under cover of the attack our right

infantry column was withdrawn, and passing in rear of the left column, was subsequently launched to an attack which secured a firm footing on Aziziyeh Ridge. Thus by nightfall the enemy was hemmed in on the south-east and south by our infantry and on the west by the cavalry, whilst to the north ran the river Euphrates.

At 3 a.m. on the 29th the enemy made a determined effort to break through our cavalry and retreat by the Aleppo Road; but after an action lasting for one and a half hours they were driven back into Ramadie, the Hussars and part of a regiment of Indian Cavalry, with some Horse Artillery and Hotchkiss guns, being mainly instrumental in heading the enemy off. At 6.15 a.m. the infantry attack was renewed from the south-east and south, and our left infantry column captured successive positions along Aziziyeh Ridge. The 39th Garhwalis seized the bridge where the Aleppo Road crosses the Canal, and captured three guns and many prisoners by 7.30 a.m.; whilst the 90th Punjabis pushed eastwards through Ramadie, and secured the Turkish Commander (Ahmed Bey) at his headquarters near the eastern front of the position. Both these units displayed commendable dash and initiative, and by 11 a.m. the whole of the Turkish force had surrendered.

Throughout the operations, which were continuous, the endurance and fine fighting spirit of the troops were conspicuous, whilst the night operations so successfully carried out testified to the excellence of their discipline and training. During the daytime the heat was considerable, and these operations, which were conducted at some distance from the river, were only rendered possible by the excellence of the arrangements for water supply. A salient factor in these successful operations was the part played by the cavalry. First by their rapid movement round the enemy's rear, and subsequently by the tactical disposition of their machine guns, they prevented the enemy's columns from breaking out, and so drove them back into the arms of the infantry. Very useful work was also done by the transport, and especially the

motor transport, whilst the medical arrangements for the evacuation of the wounded over some bad ground were most satisfactory. Amongst our captures were included 3,454 prisoners, of whom 145 were officers and 192 wounded, 13 guns, 12 machine guns, 2 armed launches, 2 barges, and large quantities of arms, ammunition, equipment, engineering stores, railway material and supplies.

Simultaneously with the above operations on our left flank, our cavalry, operating wide on the right flank of the Army, marched during the night of the 28th/29th, and occupied Mendali early on the 29th. The Turkish detachment holding that town fled into the hills, leaving 300 baggage camels in our hands and suffering some casualties from our guns whilst retreating. Mendali had for some time been used by the Turks as a source of supply, and its occupation, whilst supplementing our own needs, denied it for this purpose to the enemy.

12. In my former dispatch I had occasion to bring to notice the capable handling of the troops by the higher Commanders, assisted by their staffs, and the gallantry, endurance, and devotion to duty displayed by the Regimental Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men. To this I can only add that the fine record then established has been fully maintained under very trying climatic conditions, and that the fighting spirit, discipline, and efficiency of this Army have never stood at a higher level than they do at the present moment. The further training which it has been possible to give the troops will tend to develop still further that close co-operation between all arms which was so noticeable throughout the operations last winter and which is so essential a factor to success in war.

13. Similarly the valuable services rendered to this Army by the Directors and the Administrative Services and Departments were previously dealt with by me in detail. In their case there has been no partial respite from their labours such as has been enjoyed by the fighting troops, for their work at the front, on the Lines of Communication, and at the Base

has continued at the highest pressure. Reorganization, development of our resources, and preparation for the future have needed careful thought and unrelaxed efforts on the part of all, and the progress made in these directions has been very gratifying. More than a passing word of recognition is therefore due to these individuals, who, in spite of the intense heat during the summer months, have continued to work so assiduously in the interests of the Army.

14. Our communications by water and by land have been thoroughly overhauled to meet the new situation, additional ships and barges have been placed on the river, and our railway system has been developed as rapidly as existing conditions have permitted. The ever-increasing needs of this Army have rendered expansion as regards port facilities at Basrah necessary, and this has been successfully met by the opening of a subsidiary port in its vicinity, which is being still further developed as the result of the recommendations of a Committee assembled to report upon the matter.

An abnormally low river during the flood season gave rise to some anxiety that this might be followed by a correspondingly low river during the summer months, and though the river did not fall below its lowest record, it reached as low a gauge as it has touched within reasonable recollection. The work of the Inland Water Transport was therefore from June onwards one of considerable difficulty, and it was due to the skill and energy of the personnel of the I.W.T., and to the admirable buoying of the channels, that the number of serious groundings was almost negligible, and that the service of maintenance in front of the Base was carried on unimpaired.

The work of transportation by the I.W.T. was ably seconded by the development of our railways, and the way in which, in spite of a limited personnel, construction progressed and the railways were worked at constant high pressure is deserving of high commendation.

The health of the troops during the summer months has been uniformly satisfactory, and many of the diseases from

which we suffered in previous years—such as cholera, enteric fever, and scurvy—were either non-existent or negligible in their extent. This successful result was partly attributable to the untiring work of the officers employed in the bacteriological laboratories, without whose valuable assistance the difficulty of dealing with the epidemic diseases would have been considerably increased. But although better conditions as regards accommodation and increased facilities for combating the heat resulted generally in a far lower sick rate, an abnormal heat wave which swept over the area in July was responsible for a heavy casualty list. During this time the personnel of the Medical Services were severely taxed, but they resolutely and successfully responded to the calls made upon them. All ranks redoubled their exertions as the situation became more difficult, and the unremitting labours of the Nursing Sisters, many of whom suffered in health themselves, were worthy of the high record for devotion to duty which the Nursing Service has always maintained. The very practical assistance rendered by the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John during this trying period was typical of the valuable services so consistently rendered by that organisation.

The growing needs of this Army, and the necessity for marshalling all the available resources of this country, have necessitated the formation of a special directorate to deal with this matter, and consequently the department of Local Resources, which had been in process of construction during the advance on Baghdad, took definite shape from the date of our arrival in that city. It will be realized that in a country such as Mesopotamia, where supplies, though available in large quantities in certain districts, are organized under no system, the work of placing this matter on a sound footing is one calling for considerable business capacity and energy. It is sufficient, then, in order to show how successful this comparatively youthful organization has been, to record that all districts within reasonable distance of our troops have now been tapped, and that the ramifications of the Department

have extended very wide beyond the districts which we actually hold.

15. The cordial co-operation of the Royal Navy, which yielded such valuable results during the advance on Baghdad, has since then been maintained uninterruptedly. The gun-boat flotilla participated in the fighting during April, rendering substantial assistance to the land forces; and during the summer months, when active operations were temporarily suspended, much useful patrol work on the Lines of Communication has been performed by it in spite of the low water conditions then existing. I was fortunate in receiving visits in turn from Vice-Admiral E. A. Gaunt, C.B., C.M.G., Naval Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, and Rear-Admiral D. St. A. Wake, C.B., C.I.E., Rear-Admiral in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia; and these visits provided an opportunity for the discussion of topics of interest to both services.

16. To the Signal Service and Telegraph Department much credit is due for the rapidity with which they have constructed the extended communications rendered necessary as a result of the operations carried out during last winter. The vast network of lines which has been so quickly erected has been of very real value to the Army at large.

On other fronts at Nasariyeh and Ahwaz and on the Lines of Communication Defences quiet has reigned throughout the period under review—a state of affairs largely due to the firm control exercised by local Commanders over their districts, and to the capable manner in which the troops serving under them have carried out their somewhat monotonous duties.

A very high standard of efficiency, too, has been reached by the Imperial Service troops serving with this Army. The excellent spirit, zeal and keenness, that has permeated them has proved a valuable asset, and our thanks are due to the ruling Chiefs of India, by whose generosity and patriotism these Units have been provided and kept in the field.

17. Since my last dispatch several units have come into prominence which were at that time not fully developed.

The Light Armoured Motor Batteries began to make their mark during the advance on Baghdad, and since that time they have continued to render valuable services in reconnaissance work, in patrolling and in co-operating with other arms. The cars have been capably handled, and the personnel are resolute and determined fighters.

The Field Force Canteen, originally on a small basis, has increased in size at a rapid rate in order to cope with the ever-growing demands of this Army. Branch canteens have been opened in larger numbers month by month at all suitable stations, and these canteens have contributed in no inconsiderable way to the health and well-being of the troops at the present time.

The Military Police organization has, owing to the development of the Force and the extension of our communications, been considerably increased, and the personnel have carried out their responsible duties satisfactorily, often under trying conditions of heat.

18. I wish to acknowledge once again on behalf of this Army the services rendered by those who have worked so zealously at home and in India to supply our needs. The difficulties with which they have had to contend are well recognized here, and for this reason our gratitude is the more spontaneous.

19. In closing this dispatch I would bring to notice the names of Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Marshall, K.C.B., and Lieutenant-General Sir A. S. Cobbe, V.C., K.C.B., D.S.O., who have continued to render me every assistance, and have commanded their respective Corps with competency throughout the period under review. During the month of April the fighting was severe, but these formations were handled throughout with vigour and judgment. To Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., my thanks are due for his resolute and able handling of the troops during the operations at Ramadie. The practical result of having secured the surrender of the whole force opposed to him

is probably the best indication of his tactical skill and ability.

20. The occupation of Baghdad, the consequent extension of our Lines of Communication, the increase in the size of the Force, the development of our resources, and the need for looking well ahead into the future have thrown heavy work upon my Staff, both at General Headquarters and on the Lines of Communication. In spite of the great heat and occasional shortage of numbers in consequence they have responded whole-heartedly to every call made upon them, and I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the unvarying support which they have rendered me, and of the efficient manner in which they have carried out their duties.

Major-General Sir George MacMunn, K.C.B., D.S.O., deserves my thanks for the capable manner in which he has carried out his duties as I.G.C. His watchwords have been progress and efficiency, and the development of the Port and City of Basrah under difficult conditions, arising from an insalubrious climate, is a tribute to his energy and perseverance. His efforts have been ably seconded by the Base, Advanced Base and Administrative Commandants and those working under their orders.

21. With our advent into Baghdad the duties and responsibilities of the Civil Commissioner, Major-General The Hon. Sir Percy Cox, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., already of an exceedingly heavy nature, have increased substantially. I wish to express my gratitude to him officially for the assistance which he has rendered me, and for the advice which has so readily been placed by him at my disposal from time to time. With his name I should like to associate the personnel of the Political Service working under his orders. Their duties have been responsible and at times dangerous, and they have not hesitated at all times to give of their best, and have been the means of seconding the successful efforts of the Army in no small measure.

## APPENDIX H.

22. A list giving the names of those Officers, Ladies, Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers and Men whose services are deemed deserving of reward and special mention accompanies this dispatch.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

F. S. MAUDE, Lieutenant-General,

Commanding-in-Chief,

Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

## APPENDIX III.

---

### THE OCCUPATION OF JERUSALEM.

#### SIR EDMUND ALLENBY'S FIRST DISPATCH.

WAR OFFICE,  
*25th January 1918.*

THE Secretary of State for War has received the following Dispatch from General Sir Edmund Allenby, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force :—

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
EGYPTIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
*16th December 1917.*

MY LORD,—

I have the honour to submit a report on the operations of the Force serving in Egypt and Palestine since 28th June 1917, the date on which I assumed command.

1. When I took over the command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force at the end of June 1917, I had received instructions to report on the conditions in which offensive operations against the Turkish Army on the Palestine front might be undertaken in the autumn or winter of 1917.

After visiting the front and consulting with the Commander of the Eastern Force, I submitted my appreciation and proposals in a telegram dispatched in the second week of July.

2. The main features of the situation on the Palestine front were then as follows :—

The Turkish Army in Southern Palestine held a strong

position extending from the sea at Gaza, roughly along the main Gaza-Beersheba road to Beersheba. Gaza had been made into a strong modern fortress, heavily entrenched and wired, offering every facility for protracted defence. The remainder of the enemy's line consisted of a series of strong localities, viz.: the Sihan group of works, the Atawineh group, the Baha group, the Abu Hareira-Arab-el Teeaha trench system, and, finally, the works covering Beersheba. These groups of works were generally from 1,500 to 2,000 yards apart, except that the distance from the Hareira group to Beersheba was about 4½ miles.

The enemy's force was on a wide front, the distance from Gaza to Beersheba being about 30 miles; but his lateral communications were good, and any threatened point of the line could be very quickly reinforced.

My force was extended on a front of 22 miles, from the sea, opposite Gaza, to Gamli.

Owing to lack of water I was unable, without preparations which would require some considerable time, to approach within striking distance of the enemy, except in the small sector near the sea coast opposite Gaza.

3. My proposals received the approval of the War Cabinet, and preparations were undertaken to enable the plan I had formed to be put into execution.

I had decided to strike the main blow against the left flank of the main Turkish position, Hareira and Sheria. The capture of Beersheba was a necessary preliminary to this operation, in order to secure the water supplies at that place and to give room for the deployment of the attacking force on the high ground to the north and north-west of Beersheba, from which direction I intended to attack the Hareira-Sheria line.

This front of attack was chosen for the following reasons. The enemy's works in this sector were less formidable than elsewhere, and they were easier of approach than other parts of the enemy's defences. When Beersheba was in our hands

we should have an open flank against which to operate, and I could make full use of our superiority in mounted troops ; and a success here offered prospects of pursuing our advantage and forcing the enemy to abandon the rest of his fortified positions, which no other line of attack would afford.

It was important, in order to keep the enemy in doubt up to the last moment as to the real point of attack, that an attack should also be made on the enemy's right at Gaza in conjunction with the main operations. One of my Commanders was therefore ordered to prepare a scheme for operations against Gaza on as large a scale as the force at his disposal would permit. I also asked the Senior Naval Officer, Egypt, Rear-Admiral T. Jackson, C.B., M.V.O., to afford me naval co-operation by bombarding the Gaza defences and the enemy's railway stations and depots north of Gaza. Rear-Admiral Jackson afforded me cordial assistance, and during the period of preparation Naval Officers worked in the closest co-operation with my staff at General Headquarters and the staff of the G.O.C. troops operating in that region.

4. The difficulties to be overcome in the operations against Beersheba and the Sheria-Hareira line were considerable, and careful preparations and training were necessary. The chief difficulties were those of water and transport, and arrangements had to be made to ensure that the troops could be kept supplied with water while operating at considerable distances from their original water base for a period which might amount to a week or more ; for, though it was known that an ample supply of water existed at Beersheba, it was uncertain how quickly it could be developed or to what extent the enemy would have damaged the wells before we succeeded in occupying the town. Except at Beersheba, no large supply of water would be found till Sheria and Hareira had been captured.

The transport problem was no less difficult ; there were no good roads south of the line Gaza-Beersheba, and no reliance could therefore be placed on the use of motor transport.

Owing to the steep banks of many of the wadis which intersected the area of operations, the routes passable by wheeled transport were limited, and the going was heavy and difficult in many places. Practically the whole of the transport available in the force, including 30,000 pack camels, had to be allotted to one portion of the eastern force to enable it to be kept supplied with food, water and ammunition, at a distance of fifteen to twenty miles in advance of railhead. Arrangements were also made for railhead to be pushed forward as rapidly as possible towards Karm, and for a line to be laid from Gamli towards Beersheba for the transport of ammunition.

A railway line was also laid from Deir el Belah to the Wadi Ghuzze, close behind the sector held by another portion of the eastern force.

Considerable strain was thrown on the military railway from Kantara to the front during the period of preparation. In addition to the normal requirements of the force, a number of siege and heavy batteries, besides other artillery and units, had to be moved to the front, and large depots of supplies, ammunition and other stores accumulated at the various railheads. Preparations had also to be made and the necessary material accumulated to push forward the lines from Deir el Belah and Shellal.

5. During the period from July to October the enemy's force on the Palestine front had been increased. It was evident, from the arrival of these reinforcements and the construction of railway extensions from El Tine on the Ramleh-Beersheba railway to Deir Sineid and Beit Hanun north of Gaza, and from Deir Sineid to Huj, and from reports of the transport of large supplies of ammunition and other stores to the Palestine front, that the enemy was determined to make every effort to maintain his position on the Gaza-Beersheba line. He had considerably strengthened his defences on this line, and the strong localities mentioned in paragraph 2 had, by the end of October, been joined up to form a practically

continuous line from the sea to a point south of Sheria, except for a gap between Ali Muntar and the Sihan Group. The defensive works round Beersheba remained a detached system, but had been improved and extended.

6. The date of the attack on Beersheba, which was to commence the operations, was fixed as October 31st. Work had been begun on the railway from Shellal towards Karm and on the line from Gamli to El Buggar. The development of water at Eceni, Khalasa and Asluj proceeded satisfactorily. These last two places were to be the starting point for the mounted force detailed to make a wide flanking movement and attack Beersheba from the east and north-east.

On the morning of 27th October the Turks made a strong reconnaissance towards Karm from the direction of Kau-wukah, two regiments of cavalry and two or three thousand infantry, with guns, being employed. They attacked a line of outposts near El Girheir, held by some Yeomanry, covering railway construction. One small post was rushed and cut up, but not before inflicting heavy loss on the enemy; another post, though surrounded, held out all day, and also caused the enemy heavy loss. The gallant resistance made by the Yeomanry enabled the 53rd (Welsh) Division to come up in time, and on their advance the Turks withdrew.

The bombardment of the Gaza defences commenced on 27th October, and on 30th October warships of the Royal Navy, assisted by a French battleship, began co-operating in this bombardment.

7. On the evening of 30th October the portion of the eastern force which was to make the attack on Beersheba was concentrated in positions of readiness for the night march to its positions of deployment.

8. The night march to the positions of deployment was successfully carried out, all units reaching their appointed positions up to time.

The plan was to attack the hostile works between the Khalasa road and the Wadi Saba with two divisions, mask-

ing the works north of the Wadi Saba with the Imperial Camel Corps and some infantry, while a portion of the 53rd (Welsh) Division further north covered the left of the corps. The right of the attack was covered by a cavalry regiment. Further east, mounted troops took up a line opposite the southern defences of Beersheba.

As a preliminary to the main attack, in order to enable field guns to be brought within effective range, for wire-cutting, the enemy's advanced works at 1070 were to be taken. This was successfully accomplished at 8.45 a.m., after a short preliminary bombardment, by London troops, with small loss, 90 prisoners being taken. The cutting of the wire on the main line then proceeded satisfactorily, though pauses had to be made to allow the dust to clear ; and the final assault was ordered for 12.15 p.m. It was successful all along the front attacked, and by about 1 p.m. the whole of the works between the Khalasa road and the Wadi Saba were in our hands.

Some delay occurred in ascertaining whether the enemy still occupied the works north of the road ; it was decided, as they were still held by small parties, to attack them from the south. After a preliminary bombardment the works were occupied with little opposition by about 7.30 p.m.

The casualties were light, considering the strength of the works attacked ; a large proportion occurred during the advance towards the positions previous to the assault, the hostile guns being very accurate and very difficult to locate.

Meanwhile, the mounted troops, after a night march, for part of the force of 25 and for the remainder of 35 miles, arrived early in the morning of the 31st about Khasim Zanna, in the hills some five miles east of Beersheba. From the hills the advance into Beersheba from the east and north-east lies over an open and almost flat plain, commanded by the rising ground north of the town and flanked by an under-feature in the Wadi Saba called Tel el Saba.

A force was sent north to secure Bir es Sakaty, on the Hebron road, and protect the right flank ; this force met with

some opposition, and was engaged with hostile cavalry at Bir es Sakaty and to the north during the day. Tel el Saba was found strongly held by the enemy, and was not captured till late in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, attempts to advance in small parties across the plain towards the town made slow progress. In the evening, however, a mounted attack by Australian Light Horse, who rode straight at the town from the east, proved completely successful. They galloped over two deep trenches held by the enemy just outside the town, and entered the town at about 7 p.m., capturing numerous prisoners.

The Turks at Beersheba were undoubtedly taken completely by surprise, a surprise from which the dash of London troops and Yeomanry, finely supported by their artillery, never gave them time to recover. The charge of the Australian Light Horse completed their defeat.

A very strong position was thus taken with slight loss, and the Turkish detachment at Beersheba almost completely put out of action. About 2,000 prisoners and 13 guns were taken, and some 500 Turkish corpses were buried on the battlefield. This success laid open the left flank of the main Turkish position for a decisive blow.

9. The actual date of the attack at Gaza had been left open till the result of the attack at Beersheba was known, as it was intended that the former attack, which was designed to draw hostile reserves towards the Gaza sector, should take place twenty-four to forty-eight hours previous to the attack on the Sheria position. After the complete success of the Beersheba operations, and as the early reports indicated that an ample supply of water would be available at that place, it was hoped that it would be possible to attack Sheria by 3rd or 4th November. The attack on Gaza was accordingly ordered to take place on the morning of 2nd November. Later reports showed that the water situation was less favourable than had been hoped, but it was decided not to postpone the attack.

## APPENDIX III:

The objectives of this attack were the hostile works from Umbrella Hill (2,000 yards south-west of the town) to Sheikh Hasan, on the sea (about 2,500 yards north-west of the town). The front of the attack was about 6,000 yards, and Sheikh Hasan, the furthest objective, was over 3,000 yards from our front line. The ground over which the attack took place consisted of sand dunes, rising in places up to 15<sup>4</sup> feet in height. This sand is very deep and heavy going. The enemy's defences consisted of several lines of strongly built trenches and redoubts.

As Umbrella Hill flanked the advance against the Turkish works further west, it was decided to capture it by a preliminary operation, to take place four hours previous to the main attack. It was accordingly attacked, and captured at 11 p.m. on 1st November by a portion of the 52nd (Lowland) Division. This attack drew a heavy bombardment of Umbrella Hill itself and our front lines, which lasted for two hours, but ceased in time to allow the main attack, which was timed for 3 a.m., to form up without interference.

It had been decided to make the attack before daylight owing to the distance to be covered between our front trenches and the enemy's position.

The attack was successful in reaching all objectives, except for a section of trench on the left and some of the final objectives in the centre. Four hundred and fifty prisoners were taken and many Turks killed. The enemy also suffered heavily from the preliminary bombardment, and subsequent reports from prisoners stated that one of the divisions holding the Gaza sector was withdrawn after losing 33 per cent. of its effectives, one of the divisions in general reserve being drawn into the Gaza sector to replace it. The attack thus succeeded in its primary object, which was to prevent any units being drawn from the Gaza defences to meet the threat to the Turkish left flank, and to draw into Gaza as large a proportion as possible of the available Turkish reserves. Further, the capture of Sheikh Hasan and the south-western

defences constituted a very distinct threat to the whole of the Gaza position, which could be developed on any sign of a withdrawal on the part of the enemy.

Our losses, though considerable, were not in any way disproportionate to the results obtained.

10. Meanwhile on our right flank the water and transport difficulties were found to be greater than anticipated, and the preparations for the second phase of the attack were somewhat delayed in consequence.

On the early morning of the 1st November the 53rd (Welsh) Division, with the Imperial Camel Corps on its right, had moved out into the hills north of Beersheba, with the object of securing the flank of the attack on Sheria. Mounted troops were also sent north along the Hebron road to secure Dhaheriyeh if possible, as it was hoped that a good supply of water would be found in this area, and that a motor road which the Turks were reported to have constructed from Dhaheriyeh to Sheria could be secured for our use.

The 53rd (Welsh) Division, after a long march, took up a position from Towl Abu Jerwal (6 miles north of Beersheba) to Muweileh (4 miles north-east of Abu Irgeig). Irish troops occupied Abu Irgeig the same day.

On 3rd November we advanced north on Ain Kohleh and Tel Khuweilfeh, near which place the mounted troops had engaged considerable enemy forces on the previous day. This advance was strongly opposed, but was pushed on through difficult hill country to within a short distance of Ain Kohleh and Khuweilfeh. At these places the enemy was found holding a strong position with considerable and increasing forces. He was obviously determined not only to bar any further progress in this direction, but, if possible, to drive our flank-guard back on Beersheba. During the 4th and 5th he made several determined attacks on the mounted troops. These attacks were repulsed.

By the evening of 5th November the 19th Turkish Division, the remains of the 27th and certain units of the 16th

Division had been identified in the fighting round Tel el Khuweilfeh, and it was also fairly clear that the greater part of the hostile cavalry, supported apparently by some infantry ("Depot" troops) from Hebron, were engaged between Khuweilfeh and the Hebron road.

The action of the enemy in thus employing the whole of his available reserves in an immediate counter-stroke so far to the east was apparently a bold effort to induce me to make essential alterations in my offensive plan, thereby gaining time and disorganizing my arrangements. The country north of Beersheba was exceedingly rough and hilly, and very little water was to be found there. Had the enemy succeeded in drawing considerable forces against him in that area the result might easily have been an indecisive fight (for the terrain was very suitable to his methods of defence), and my own main striking force would probably have been made too weak effectively to break the enemy's centre in the neighbourhood of Sheria Hareira. This might have resulted in our gaining Beersheba, but failing to do more—in which case Beersheba would only have been an incubus of a most inconvenient kind. However, the enemy's action was not allowed to make any essential modification to the original plan, which it had been decided to carry out at dawn on 6th November.

By the evening of 5th November all preparations had been made to attack the Kauwukah and Rushdi systems and to make every effort to reach Sheria before nightfall.

The mounted troops were to be prepared in the event of a success by the main force to collect, as they were somewhat widely scattered owing to water difficulties, and push north in pursuit of the enemy.

Tel el Khuweilfeh was to be attacked at dawn on the 6th, and the troops were to endeavour to reach line Tel el Khuweilfeh-Rijmel Dhib.

ii. At dawn on the 6th the attacking force had taken up positions of readiness to the S.E. of the Kauwukah system of trenches. The attack was to be commenced by an assault

on the group of works forming the extreme left of the enemy's defensive system, followed by an advance due west up the railway, capturing the line of detached works which lay east of the railway. During this attack London and Irish troops were to advance towards the Kauukah system, bringing forward their guns to within wire-cutting range. They were to assault the south-eastern face of the Kauukah system as soon as the bombardment had proved effective, and thence take the remainder of the system in enfilade.

The attack progressed rapidly, the Yeomanry storming the works on the enemy's extreme left with great dash; and soon after noon the London and Irish troops commenced their attack. It was completely successful in capturing all its objectives, and the whole of the Rushdi system in addition. Sheria Station was also captured before dark. The Yeomanry reached the line of the Wadi Sheria to Wadi Union; and the troops on the left were close to Hareira Redoubt, which was still occupied by the enemy. This attack was a fine performance, the troops advancing 8 or 9 miles during the day and capturing a series of very strong works covering a front of about 7 miles, the greater part of which had been held and strengthened by the enemy for over six months. Some 600 prisoners were taken and some guns and machine guns captured. Our casualties were comparatively slight. The greatest opposition was encountered by the Yeomanry in the early morning, the works covering the left of the enemy's line being strong and stubbornly defended.

During the afternoon, as soon as it was seen that the attack had succeeded, mounted troops were ordered to take up the pursuit and to occupy Huj and Jemmamah.

The 53rd (Welsh) Division had again had very severe fighting on the 6th. Their attack at dawn on Tel el Khuweilfeh was successful, and, though they were driven off a hill by a counter-attack, they retook it and captured another hill, which much improved their position. The Turkish losses in this area were very heavy indeed, and the stubborn fighting.

of the 53rd (Welsh) Division, Imperial Camel Corps, and part of the mounted troops during the 2nd to the 6th November drew in and exhausted the Turkish reserves and paved the way for the success of the attack on Sheria. The 53rd (Welsh) Division took several hundred prisoners and some guns during this fighting.

12. The bombardment of Gaza had meanwhile continued, and another attack was ordered to take place on the night of 6th-7th.

The objectives were, on the right, Outpost Hill and Middlesex Hill (to be attacked at 11.30 p.m. on the 6th), and on the left the line Belah Trench-Turtle Hill (to be attacked at dawn on the 7th).

During the 6th a certain amount of movement on the roads north of Gaza was observed by our airmen and fired on by our heavy artillery, but nothing indicating a general retirement from Gaza.

The attack on Outpost Hill and Middlesex Hill met with little opposition, and as soon, after they had been taken, as patrols could be pushed forward, the enemy was found to be gone. East Anglian troops on the left also found at dawn that the enemy had retired during the night, and early in the morning the main force occupied the northern and eastern defences of Gaza. Rearguards were still occupying Beit Hanun and the Atawineh and Tank systems, from whence Turkish artillery continued to fire on Gaza and Ali Muntar till dusk.

As soon as it was seen that the Turks had evacuated Gaza a part of the force pushed along the coast to the mouth of the Wadi Hesi, so as to turn the Wadi Hesi line and prevent the enemy making any stand there. Cavalry had already pushed on round the north of Gaza, and became engaged with an enemy rearguard at Beit Hanun, which maintained its position till nightfall. The force advancing along the coast reached the Wadi Hesi by evening, and succeeded in establishing itself on the north bank in the face of considerable

opposition, a Turkish rearguard making several determined counter-attacks.

On our extreme right the situation remained practically unchanged during the 7th ; the enemy made no further attempt to counter-attack, but maintained his positions opposite our right flank guard.

In the centre the Hareira Tepe Redoubt was captured at dawn ; some prisoners and guns were taken. The London troops, after a severe engagement at Tel el Sheria, which they captured by a bayonet charge at 4 a.m. on the 7th, subsequently repulsing several counter-attacks, pushed forward their line about a mile to the north of Tel el Sheria ; the mounted troops on the right moved towards Jemmamah and Huj, but met with considerable opposition from hostile rearguards.

13. During the 8th the advance was continued, and interest was chiefly centred in an attempt to cut off, if possible, the Turkish rearguard which had held the Tank and Atawineh systems. The enemy had, however, retreated during the night 7th-8th, and though considerable captures of prisoners, guns, ammunition and other stores were made during the day, chiefly in the vicinity of Huj, no large formed body of the enemy was cut off. The Turkish rearguards fought stubbornly and offered considerable opposition. Near Huj a fine charge by some squadrons of the Worcester and Warwick Yeomanry captured 12 guns, and broke the resistance of a hostile rearguard. It soon became obvious from the reports of the Royal Flying Corps, who throughout the 7th and 8th attacked the retreating columns with bombs and machine-gun fire, and from other evidence, that the enemy was retiring in considerable disorganization, and could offer no very serious resistance if pressed with determination.

Instructions were accordingly issued on the morning of the 9th to the mounted troops, directing them on the line El Tine-Beit Duras, with orders to press the enemy relentlessly. They were to be supported by a portion of the force, which was ordered to push forward to Julis and Mejdel.

The enemy opposite our right flank guard had commenced to retreat towards Hebron on the morning of the 8th. He was pursued for a short distance by the Yeomanry, and some prisoners and camels were captured, but the Yeomanry were then recalled to rejoin the main body of the mounted troops for the more important task of the pursuit of the enemy's main body.

By the 9th, therefore, operations had reached the stage of a direct pursuit by as many troops as could be supplied so far in front of railhead. The problem, in fact, became one of supply rather than manœuvre. The question of water and forage was a very difficult one. Even where water was found in sufficient quantities, it was usually in wells and not on the surface, and consequently if the machinery for working the wells was damaged, or a sufficient supply of troughs was not available, the process of watering a large quantity of animals was slow and difficult.

14. On the evening of 9th November there were indications that the enemy was organizing a counter-attack towards Arak el Menshiye by all available units of the force which had retired towards Hebron, with the object of taking pressure off the main force, which was retiring along the coastal plain. It was obvious that the Hebron force, which was believed to be short of transport and ammunition, to have lost heavily and to be in a generally disorganized state, could make no effective diversion, and that this threat could practically be disregarded. Other information showed the seriousness of the enemy's losses and the disorganization of his forces.

Orders were accordingly issued to press the pursuit and to reach Junction Station as early as possible, thus cutting off the Jerusalem Army, while the Imperial Camel Corps was ordered to move to the neighbourhood of Tel el Nejile, where it would be on the flank of any counter-stroke from the hills.

Operations on the 10th and 11th showed a stiffening of the enemy's resistance on the general line of the Wadi Sukereir, with centre about El Kustineh ; the Hebron group,

after an ineffective demonstration in the direction of Arak el Menshiye on the 10th, retired north-east and prolonged the enemy's line towards Beit Jibrin. Royal Flying Corps reports indicated the total hostile forces opposed to us on this line at about 15,000 ; and this increased resistance, coupled with the capture of prisoners from almost every unit of the Turkish force, tended to show that we were no longer opposed to rear-guards, but that all the remainder of the Turkish Army which could be induced to fight was making a last effort to arrest our pursuit south of the important Junction Station.

In these circumstances our progress on the 10th and 11th was slow ; the troops suffered considerably from thirst (a hot exhausting wind blew during these two days), and our supply difficulties were great ; but by the evening of the 11th favourable positions had been reached for a combined attack.

The 12th was spent in preparations for the attack, which was ordered to be begun early on the morning of the 13th, on the enemy's position covering Junction Station. Our forces were now operating at a distance of some 35 miles in advance of their railhead, and the bringing up and distribution of supplies and ammunition formed a difficult problem. The routes north of the Wadi Hesi were found to be hard and good going, though there were some difficult Wadi crossings, but the main road through Gaza and as far as Beit Hanun was sandy and difficult. The supply of water in the area of operations, though good and plentiful in most of the villages, lies mainly in wells 100 feet or more below the surface, and in these circumstances a rapid supply and distribution was almost impossible. Great credit is due to all concerned that these difficulties were overcome and that it was found possible not only to supply the troops already in the line, but to bring up two heavy batteries to support the attack.

15. The situation on the morning of 13th November was that the enemy had strung out his force (amounting probably to no more than 20,000 rifles in all) on a front of 20 miles, from El Kubeibeh on the north to about Beit Jibrin to the

south. The right half of his line ran roughly parallel to and only about 5 miles in front of the Ramleh-Junction Station railway, his main line of supply from the north, and his right flank was already almost turned. This position had been dictated to him by the rapidity of our movement along the coast, and the determination with which his rearguards on this flank had been pressed.

The advanced guard of the 52nd (Lowland) Division had forced its way almost to Burkah on the 11th, on which day also some mounted troops pushed across the Nahr Sukereir at Jisr Esdud, where they held a bridgehead. During the 12th the Yeomanry pushed north up the left bank of the Nahruh Sereir, and eventually seized Tel el Murreh on the right bank near the mouth.

The hostile commander may have hoped to exercise some moral effect on our plans by the presence of the southern portion of his forces on the flank of our advance; if so, he was mistaken. The Australian mounted troops, extended over a wide front, not only secured this flank but pressed forward on the 12th towards Balin, Berkusie, and Tel es Safi. Their advanced troops were counter-attacked and driven back a short distance, but the enemy made no effort to press further forward. Arrangements were then made to attack on the 13th.

The country over which the attack took place is open and rolling, dotted with small villages surrounded by mud walls with plantations of trees outside the walls. The most prominent feature is the line of heights on which are the villages of Katrah and El Mughar, standing out above the low flat ground which separates them from the rising ground to the west, on which stands the village of Beshshit, about 2,000 yards distant. This Katrah-El Mughar line forms a very strong position, and it was here that the enemy made his most determined resistance against the turning movement directed against his right flank. The capture of this position by the 52nd (Lowland) Division, assisted by a most dashing charge of mounted troops, who galloped across the plain under

heavy fire and turned the enemy's position from the north, was a fine feat of arms. Some 1,100 prisoners, 3 guns and many machine guns were taken here. After this the enemy resistance weakened, and by the evening his forces were retiring east and north.

The infantry, who were sent forward about dusk to occupy Junction Station, met with some resistance and halted for the night, not much more than a mile west of the station. Early next morning (14th November) they occupied the station.

The enemy's army had now been broken into two separate parts, which retired north and east respectively, and were reported to consist of small scattered groups rather than formed bodies of any size.

In fifteen days our force had advanced sixty miles on its right and about forty on its left. It had driven a Turkish Army of nine Infantry Divisions and one Cavalry Division out of a position in which it had been entrenched for six months, and had pursued it, giving battle whenever it attempted to stand, and inflicting on it losses amounting probably to nearly two-thirds of the enemy's original effectives. Over 9,000 prisoners, about eighty guns, more than 100 machine guns and very large quantities of ammunition and other stores had been captured.

16. After the capture of Junction Station on the morning of the 14th, our troops secured a position covering the station, while the Australian mounted troops reached Kezaze that same evening.

The mounted troops pressed on towards Ramleh and Ludd. On the right Naaneh was attacked and captured in the morning, while on the left the New Zealand Mounted Rifles had a smart engagement at Ayun Kara (six miles south of Jaffa). Here the Turks made a determined counter-attack and got to within fifteen yards of our line. A bayonet attack drove them back with heavy loss.

Flanking the advance along the railway to Ramleh and covering the main road from Ramleh to Jerusalem, a ridge

stands up prominently out of the low foothills surrounding it. This is the site of the ancient Gezer, near which the village of Abu Shusheh now stands. A hostile rearguard had established itself on this feature. It was captured on the morning of the 15th in a brilliant attack by mounted troops, who galloped up the ridge from the south. A gun and 360 prisoners were taken in this affair.

By the evening of the 15th the mounted troops had occupied Ramleh and Ludd, and had pushed patrols to within a short distance of Jaffa. At Ludd 300 prisoners were taken, and five destroyed aeroplanes and a quantity of abandoned war material were found at Ramleh and Ludd.

Jaffa was occupied without opposition on the evening of the 16th.

17. The situation was now as follows :—

The enemy's army, cut in two by our capture of Junction Station, had retired partly east into the mountains towards Jerusalem and partly north along the plain. The nearest line on which these two portions could re-unite was the line Tul Keram-Nablus. Reports from the Royal Flying Corps indicated that it was the probable intention of the enemy to evacuate Jerusalem and withdraw to reorganize on this line.

On our side the mounted troops had been marching and fighting continuously since 31st October, and had advanced a distance of seventy-five miles, measured in a straight line from Asluj to Jaffa. The troops, after their heavy fighting at Gaza, had advanced in nine days a distance of about forty miles, with two severe engagements and continual advanced guard fighting. The 52nd (Lowland) Division had covered sixty-nine miles in this period.

The railway was being pushed forward as rapidly as possible, and every opportunity was taken of landing stores at points along the coast. The landing of stores was dependent on a continuance of favourable weather, and might at any moment be stopped for several days together.

A pause was therefore necessary to await the progress of

railway construction, but before our position in the plain could be considered secure it was essential to obtain a hold of the one good road which traverses the Judæan range from north to south, from Nablus to Jerusalem.

18. The west side of the Judæan range consists of a series of spurs running east and west, and separated from one another by narrow valleys. These spurs are steep, bare and stony for the most part, and in places precipitous. Between the foot of the spurs of the main range and the coastal plain is the low range known as the Shephelah.

On our intended line of advance only one good road, the main Jaffa-Jerusalem road, traversed the hills from east to west. For nearly four miles, between Bab el Wad ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of Latron) and Saris, this road passes through a narrow defile, and it had been damaged by the Turks in several places. The other roads were mere tracks on the side of the hill or up the stony beds of wadis, and were impracticable for wheeled transport without improvement. Throughout these hills the water supply was scanty without development.

On 17th November the Yeomanry had commenced to move from Ramleh through the hills direct on Bireh by Annabeh, Berfilya and Beit ur el Tahta (Lower Bethhoron). By the evening of 18th November one portion of the Yeomanry had reached the last-named place, while another portion had occupied Shilta. The route had been found impossible for wheels beyond Annabeh.

On the 19th the infantry commenced its advance. One portion was to advance up the main road as far as Kuryet el Enab, with its right flank protected by Australian mounted troops. From that place, in order to avoid any fighting in the close vicinity of the Holy City, it was to strike north towards Bireh by a track leading through Biddu. The remainder of the infantry was to advance through Berfilya to Beit Likia and Beit Dukka, and thence support the movement of the other portion.

After capturing Latron and Amnas on the morning of the

19th, the remainder of the day was spent in clearing the defile up to Saris, which was defended by hostile rearguards.

On the 20th Kuryet el Enab was captured with the bayonet in the face of organized opposition, while Beit Dukka was also captured. On the same day the Yeomanry got to within four miles of the Nablus-Jerusalem road, but were stopped by strong opposition about Beitunia.

On the 21st a body of infantry moved north-east by a track from Kuryet el Enab through Biddu and Kulundia towards Bireh. The track was found impassable for wheels, and was under hostile shell-fire. Progress was slow, but by evening the ridge on which stands Neby Samwil was secured. A further body of troops was left at Kuryet el Enab to cover the flank and demonstrate along the main Jerusalem road. It drove hostile parties from Kustul,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of Kuryet el Enab, and secured this ridge.

By the afternoon of the 21st advanced parties of Yeomanry were within two miles of the road and an attack was being delivered on Beitunia by other mounted troops.

19. The positions reached on the evening of the 21st practically marked the limit of progress in this first attempt to gain the Nablus-Jerusalem road. The Yeomanry were heavily counter-attacked, and fell back, after bitter fighting, on Beit ur el Foka (Upper Bethhoron). During the 22nd the enemy made two counter-attacks on the Neby Samwil ridge which were repulsed. Determined and gallant attacks were made on the 23rd and on the 24th on the strong positions to the west of the road held by the enemy, who had brought up reinforcements and numerous machine guns, and could support his infantry by artillery fire from guns placed in positions along the main road. Our artillery, from lack of roads, could not be brought up to give adequate support to our infantry. Both attacks failed, and it was evident that a period of preparation and organization would be necessary before an attack could be delivered in sufficient strength to drive the enemy from his positions west of the road.

Orders were accordingly issued to consolidate the positions gained and prepare for relief.

Though these troops had failed to reach their final objectives, they had achieved invaluable results. The narrow passes from the plain to the plateau of the Judæan range have seldom been forced, and have been fatal to many invading armies. Had the attempt not been made at once, or had it been pressed with less determination, the enemy would have had time to reorganize his defence in the passes lower down, and the conquest of the plateau would then have been slow, costly and precarious. As it was, positions had been won from which the final attack could be prepared and delivered with good prospects of success.

20. By 4th December all reliefs were complete, and a line was held from Kustul by the Neby Samwil ridge, Beit Izza, and Beit Dukka, to Beit ur el Tahta.

During this period attacks by the enemy along the whole line led to severe local fighting. On 25th November our advanced posts north of the river Auja were driven back across the river. From the 27th to the 30th the enemy delivered a series of attacks directed especially against the high ground north and north-east of Jaffa, the left flank of our position in the hills from Beit ur el Foka to El Burj, and the Neby Samwil ridge. An attack on the night of the 29th succeeded in penetrating our outpost line north-east of Jaffa, but next morning the whole hostile detachment, numbering 150, was surrounded and captured by Australian Light Horse. On the 30th a similar fate befell a battalion which attacked near El Burj; a counter-attack by Australian Light Horse took 200 prisoners and practically destroyed the attacking battalion. There was particularly heavy fighting between El Burj and Beit ur el Foka, but the Yeomanry and Scottish troops successfully resisted all attacks and inflicted severe losses on the enemy. At Beit ur el Foka one company took 300 prisoners. All efforts by the enemy to drive us off the Neby Samwil ridge were completely repulsed. These attacks

cost the Turks very dearly. We took 750 prisoners between 27th and 30th November, and the enemy's losses in killed and wounded were undoubtedly heavy. His attacks in no way affected our positions nor impeded the progress of our preparations.

21. Favoured by a continuance of fine weather, preparations for a fresh advance against the Turkish positions west and south of Jerusalem proceeded rapidly. Existing roads and tracks were improved and new ones constructed to enable heavy and field artillery to be placed in position and ammunition and supplies brought up. The water supply was also developed.

The date for the attack was fixed as 8th December. Welsh troops, with a cavalry regiment attached, had advanced from their positions north of Beersheba up the Hebron-Jerusalem road on the 4th. No opposition was met, and by the evening of the 6th the head of this column was ten miles north of Hebron. The infantry were directed to reach the Bethlehem-Beit Jala area by the 7th, and the line Surbahir-Sherafat (about three miles south of Jerusalem) by dawn on the 8th, and no troops were to enter Jerusalem during this operation.

It was recognized that the troops on the extreme right might be delayed on the 7th and fail to reach the positions assigned to them by dawn on the 8th. Arrangements were therefore made to protect the right flank west of Jerusalem, in case such delay occurred.

22. On the 7th the weather broke, and for three days rain was almost continuous. The hills were covered with mist at frequent intervals, rendering observation from the air and visual signalling impossible. A more serious effect of the rain was to jeopardize the supply arrangements by rendering the roads almost impassable—quite impassable, indeed, for mechanical transport and camels in many places.

The troops moved into positions of assembly by night, and, assaulting at dawn on the 8th, soon carried their first objectives. They then pressed steadily forward. The mere

physical difficulty of climbing the steep and rocky hillsides and crossing the deep valleys would have sufficed to render progress slow, and the opposition encountered was considerable. Artillery support was soon difficult, owing to the length of the advance and the difficulty of moving guns forward. But by about noon London troops had already advanced over two miles, and were swinging north-east to gain the Nablus-Jerusalem road ; while the Yeomanry had captured the Beit Iksa spur, and were preparing for a further advance.

As the right column had been delayed and was still some distance south of Jerusalem, it was necessary for the London troops to throw back their right and form a defensive flank facing east towards Jerusalem, from the western outskirts of which considerable rifle and artillery fire was being experienced. This delayed the advance, and early in the afternoon it was decided to consolidate the line gained and resume the advance next day, when the right column would be in a position to exert its pressure. By nightfall our line ran from Neby Samwil to the east of Beit Iksa, through Lifta to a point about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Jerusalem, whence it was thrown back facing east. All the enemy's prepared defences west and north-west of Jerusalem had been captured, and our troops were within a short distance of the Nablus-Jerusalem road.

The London troops and Yeomanry had displayed great endurance in difficult conditions. The London troops especially, after a night march in heavy rain to reach their positions of deployment, had made an advance of three to four miles in difficult hills in the face of stubborn opposition.

During the day about 300 prisoners were taken, and many Turks killed. Our own casualties were light.

23. Next morning the advance was resumed. The Turks had withdrawn during the night, and the London troops and Yeomanry, driving back rearguards, occupied a line across the Nablus-Jerusalem road four miles north of Jerusalem, while Welsh troops occupied a position east of Jerusalem across the Jericho road. These operations isolated Jerusalem,

and at about noon the enemy sent out a parlementaire and surrendered the city.

At noon on the 11th I made my official entry into Jerusalem.

24. In the operations from 31st October to 9th December over 12,000 prisoners were taken. The total captures of material have not yet been fully counted, owing to the large area covered by these operations, but are known to include about 100 guns of various calibres, many machine guns, more than 20,000,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, and 250,000 rounds of gun ammunition. More than twenty aeroplanes were destroyed by our airmen or burnt by the enemy to avoid capture.

25. My thanks are due to the cordial assistance which I have received from His Excellency the High Commissioner, General Sir Francis Wingate, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., who has always given me the greatest assistance.

26. During the whole period Rear-Admiral T. Jackson, C.B., M.V.O., has given me most loyal support, and has co-operated with me in a manner which has materially contributed to our success.

27. Brigadier-General Sir G. Macaulay, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director of Railway Transport, has given invaluable help in the organization of my railways.

28. All ranks and services in the Force under my command have acquitted themselves in a manner beyond praise. Fatigue, thirst, heat and cold have been endured uncomplainingly. The co-operation of all arms has been admirable, and has enabled success in battle to be consummated by irresistible and victorious pursuit.

Leaders and staffs have all done well, and in particular I bring to Your Lordship's notice the names of the following officers :—

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Sir Philip Chetwode, Bart., K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O. My plan of operations was based on his appreciation of the situation and on the scheme which he put forward to me on my arrival in

Egypt last summer. To his strategical foresight and tactical skill the success of the campaign is largely due.

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) E. S. Bulfin, C.B., C.V.O., has shown great ability as an organizer and leader in high command. To his determination in attack, and his dash and drive in pursuit, is due the swift advance to Jerusalem.

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Sir Henry Chauvel, K.C.M.G., C.B., has commanded my mounted troops with invariable success in attack and pursuit. His co-operation with other arms has always been ready and loyal, and has contributed greatly to the victory won.

Major-General L. J. Bols, C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the General Staff, has done brilliant work. He is a General Staff Officer of the first rank.

Major-General J. Adye, C.B., Deputy Adjutant-General, has rendered invaluable service.

Major-General Sir Walter Campbell, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., Deputy Quartermaster-General, has had a difficult task which he has carried out with complete success.

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) G. P. Dawnay, D.S.O., M.V.O., Reserve of Officers, Brigadier-General, General Staff, has proved himself a strategist and tactician of unusual merit. His work has been of the highest value.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

E. H. H. ALLENBY, General,

Commanding-in-Chief,

Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

## APPENDIX IV.

---

### THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI.

SIR DOUGLAS HAIG'S FIFTH DISPATCH.

WAR OFFICE,  
*4th March 1918.*

THE following Dispatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, K.T., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., Commanding-in-Chief British Armies in France :—

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
BRITISH ARMIES IN THE FIELD,  
*20th February 1918.*

MY LORD,—

I have the honour to submit the following Report on the operations on the Cambrai front during November and December 1917.

#### GENERAL PLAN.

(1) As pointed out in my last Dispatch, the object of these operations was to gain a local success by a sudden attack at a point where the enemy did not expect it. Our repeated attacks in Flanders and those of our Allies elsewhere had brought about large concentrations of the enemy's forces on the threatened fronts, with a consequent reduction in the garrisons of certain other sectors of his line.

Of these weakened sectors the Cambrai front had been selected as the most suitable for the surprise operation in contemplation. The ground there was, on the whole, favour-

able for the employment of tanks, which were to play an important part in the enterprise, and facilities existed for the concealment of the necessary preparations for the attack.

If, after breaking through the German defence systems on this front, we could secure Bourlon to the north, and establish a good flank position to the east, in the direction of Cambrai, we should be well placed to exploit the situation locally between Bourlon and the Sensée River and to the north-west. The capture of Cambrai itself was subsidiary to this operation, the object of our advance towards that town being primarily to cover our flank and puzzle the enemy regarding our intentions.

The enemy was laying out fresh lines of defence behind those which he had already completed on the Cambrai front ; and it was to be expected that his troops would be redistributed as soon as our pressure in Flanders was relaxed. He had already brought large forces from Russia in exchange for Divisions exhausted in the struggle in the Western theatre, and it was practically certain that heavy reinforcements would be brought from East to West during the winter. Moreover his tired Divisions, after a winter's rest, would recover their efficiency.

For all these reasons, if the existing opportunity for a surprise attack were allowed to lapse, it would probably be many months before an equally favourable one would again offer itself. Furthermore, having regard to the future, it was desirable to show the enemy that he could not with impunity reduce his garrisons beyond a certain point without incurring grave risks.

Against these arguments in favour of immediate action I had to weigh the fact that my own troops had been engaged for many months in heavy fighting, and that, though their efforts had been uniformly successful, the conditions of the struggle had greatly taxed their strength. Only part of the losses in my Divisions had been replaced, and many recently arrived drafts, still far from being fully trained, were included

in the ranks of the Armies. Under these conditions it was a serious matter to make a further heavy call on my troops at the end of such a strenuous year.

On the other hand, from the nature of the operation, the size of the force which could be employed was bound, in any case, to be comparatively small, since success depended "so much on secrecy, and it is impossible to keep secret the concentration of very large forces. The demand made upon my resources, therefore, should not be a great one.

While considering these different factors, preparations were quietly carried on, so that all might be ready for the attack if I found it possible to carry it out. The success of the enemy's offensive in Italy subsequently added great force to the arguments in favour of undertaking the operation, although the means at my disposal for the purpose were further reduced as a consequence of the Italian situation.

Eventually I decided that, despite the various limiting factors, I could muster enough force to make a first success sufficiently sure to justify undertaking the attack, but that the degree to which this success could be followed up must depend on circumstances.

It was calculated that, provided secrecy could be maintained to the last moment, no large hostile reinforcements were likely to reach the scene of action for forty-eight hours after the commencement of the attack. I informed General the Hon. Sir Julian Byng, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., M.V.O., to whom the execution of the plans in connection with the Cambrai operations was entrusted, that the advance would be stopped by me after that time, or sooner if necessary, unless the results then gained and the general situation justified its continuance.

The general plan of attack was to dispense with previous artillery preparation, and to depend instead on tanks to smash through the enemy's wire, of which there was a great quantity protecting his trenches.

As soon as the advance of the tanks and infantry, work-

ing in close co-operation, began, the artillery was to assist with counter-battery and barrage work ; but no previous registration of guns for this purpose could be permitted, as it would rouse the enemy's suspicions. The artillery of our new Armies was therefore necessarily subjected to a severe test in this operation, and proved itself entirely worthy of the confidence placed in it.

The infantry, tanks, and artillery thus working in combination were to endeavour to break through all the enemy's lines of defence on the first day. If this were successfully accomplished and the situation developed favourably, cavalry were then to be passed through to raid the enemy's communications, disorganize his system of command, damage his railways, and interfere as much as possible with the arrival of his reinforcements. It was explained to all Commanders that everything depended on secrecy up to the moment of starting, and after that on bold, determined and rapid action. Unless opposition could be beaten down quickly, no great results could be looked for.

The Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies, to whom I secretly communicated my plans, most readily agreed to afford me every assistance. In addition to the steps taken by him to engage the enemy's attention elsewhere, he arranged for a strong force of French infantry and cavalry to be in a position whence they could be moved forward rapidly to take part in the exploitation of our success, if the situation should render it possible to bring them into action. On the 20th November certain of these French units were actually put in motion. The course of events, however, did not open out the required opportunity for their employment, but the French forces were held in readiness and within easy reach so long as there appeared to be any hope of it. Had the situation on the 20th November developed somewhat more favourably in certain directions, the nature of which will become apparent in the course of this report, the presence and co-operation of these French troops would have been of the greatest value.

## THE ENEMY'S DEFENCES.

(2) The German defences on this front had been greatly improved and extended since the opening of our offensive in April, and comprised three main systems of resistance.

The first of these three trench systems, constituting part of the Hindenburg Line proper, ran in a general north-westerly direction for a distance of six miles from the Canal de l'Escaut at Banteux to Havrincourt. There it turned abruptly north along the line of the Canal du Nord for a distance of four miles to Mœuvres, thus forming a pronounced salient in the German front.

In advance of the Hindenburg Line the enemy had constructed a series of strong forward positions, including La Vacquerie and the north-eastern corner of Havrincourt Wood. Behind it, and at distances respectively varying from a little less to rather more than a mile, and from three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half miles, lay the second and third main German systems, known as the Hindenburg Reserve Line, and the Beaurevoir, Masnières, Marquion Lines.

## THE ATTACK.

(3) All necessary preparations were completed in time, and with a secrecy reflecting the greatest credit on all concerned. At 6.20 a.m. on the 20th November, without any previous artillery bombardment, tanks and infantry attacked on a front of about six miles from east of Gonnelieu to the Canal du Nord opposite Hermies.

At the same hour, demonstrations with gas, smoke and artillery took place on practically the whole of the British front south of the Scarpe, and subsidiary attacks were launched east of Epehy and between Bullecourt and Fontaine-lez-Croisilles.

On the principal front of attack, the tanks moved forward in advance of the infantry, crushing down the enemy's wire and forming great lanes through which our infantry could

pass. Protected by smoke barrages from the view of the enemy's artillery, they rolled on across the German trenches, smashing up the enemy's machine guns and driving his infantry to ground. Close behind our tanks our own infantry followed and, while the tanks patrolled the line of hostile trenches, cleared the German infantry from their dug-outs and shelters.

In this way, both the main system of the Hindenburg Line and its outer defences were rapidly overrun, and tanks and infantry proceeded in accordance with programme to the attack upon the Hindenburg Reserve Line.

In this advance, the 12th (Eastern) Division, moving along the Bonavis Ridge on the right of our attack, encountered obstinate resistance at Lateau Wood, which sheltered a number of German batteries. Fierce fighting, in which infantry and tank crews displayed the greatest gallantry, continued throughout the morning at this point, and ended in the capture of the position, together with the enemy's guns.

Meanwhile, the 20th (Light) Division, which had captured La Vacquerie at the opening of its attack, stormed the powerful defences of Welsh Ridge. The 6th Division carried the village of Ribecourt, after sharp fighting among the streets and houses, while the 62nd (West Riding) Division (T.) stormed Havrincourt, where also parties of the enemy held out for a time.

The capture of these two villages secured the flanks of the 51st (Highland) Division (T.), advancing on the left centre of our attack up the slopes of the Flesquières Hill against the German trench lines on the southern side of Flesquières village. Here very heavy fighting took place. The stout brick wall skirting the Chateau grounds opposed a formidable obstacle to our advance, while German machine guns swept the approaches. A number of tanks were knocked out by direct hits from German field batteries in position beyond the crest of the hill. None the less, with the exception of the

village itself, our second objectives in this area were gained before midday.

Many of the hits upon our tanks at Flesquières were obtained by a German artillery officer who, remaining alone at his battery, served a field gun single-handed until killed at his gun. The great bravery of this officer aroused the admiration of all ranks.

On the left of our attack west of the Canal du Nord, the 36th (Ulster) Division captured a German strong point on the spoil bank of the canal and pushed northwards in touch with the West Riding troops, who, as the first stage in a most gallant and remarkably successful advance, had taken Havrincourt. By 10.30 a.m. the general advance beyond the Hindenburg Reserve Line to our final objectives had begun and cavalry were moving up behind our infantry.

In this period of the attack tanks and British infantry battalions of the 29th Division entered Masnières and captured Marcoing and Neuf Wood, securing the passages of the Canal de l'Escaut at both villages.

At Marcoing the tanks arrived at the moment when a party of the enemy were in the act of running out an electrical connection to blow up one of the bridges. This party was fired on by a tank and the bridge secured intact. At Masnières, however, the retreating enemy succeeded in destroying partially the bridge carrying the main road. In consequence the first tank which endeavoured to cross at this point fell through the bridge, completing its destruction.

The advance of a number of our guns had been unavoidably delayed in the sunken roads which served this part of the battlefield, and though our infantry continued their progress beyond Masnières, without the assistance of tanks and artillery they were not able at first to clear the enemy entirely from the northern portion of the village. Here parties of Germans held out during the afternoon, and gave the enemy time to occupy Rumilly, and the section of the Beaurevoir-Masnières line south of it; while the destruction

of the bridge also prevented the cavalry from crossing the canal in sufficient strength to overcome his resistance.

In spite of this difficulty, a squadron of the Fort Garry Horse, Canadian Cavalry Brigade, succeeded during the afternoon in crossing the canal by a temporary bridge constructed during the day. This squadron passed through the Beaurevoir-Masnieres line and charged and captured a German battery in position to the east of it. Continuing its advance, it dispersed a body of about 300 German infantry, and did not cease its progress until the greater part of its horses had been killed or wounded. The squadron thereupon took up a position in a sunken road, where it maintained itself until night fell. It then withdrew to our lines, bringing with it several prisoners taken in the course of a most gallant exploit.

Meanwhile, west of the Canal de l'Escaut patrols of the 6th Division during the afternoon entered Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut, where they were reinforced by cavalry, and other cavalry units pushed out towards Cantaing. West of Flesquieres, the 62nd Division, operating northwards from Havrincourt, made important progress. Having carried the Hindenburg Reserve Line north of that village, it rapidly continued its attack and captured Graincourt, where two anti-tank guns were destroyed by the tanks accompanying our infantry. Before nightfall infantry and cavalry had entered Anneux, though the enemy's resistance in this village does not appear to have been entirely overcome until the following morning.

This attack of the 62nd (West Riding) Division constitutes a brilliant achievement, in which the troops concerned completed an advance of four and a half miles from their original front, over-running two German systems of defence and gaining possession of three villages.

On the left flank of our attack Ulster battalions pushed northwards along the Hindenburg Line and its forward defences, maintaining touch with the West Riding troops, and carried the whole of the German trench systems west of the Canal du Nord as far north as the Bapaume-Cambrai road.

At the end of the first day of the attack, therefore, three German systems of defence had been broken through to a depth of some four and a half miles on a wide front, and over 5,000 prisoners had already been brought in. But for the wrecking of the bridge at Masnières and the check at Flesquières still greater results might have been attained.

Throughout these operations the value of the services rendered by the tanks was very great, and the utmost gallantry, enterprise, and resolution were displayed by both officers and crews. In combination with the other arms they helped to make possible a remarkable success. Without their aid in opening a way through the German wire success could only have been attained by methods which would have given the enemy ample warning of our attack, and have allowed him time to mass troops to oppose it. As has been pointed out above, to enable me to undertake such an operation with the troops at my disposal secrecy to the last moment was essential. The tanks alone made it possible to dispense with artillery preparation, and so to conceal our intentions from the enemy up to the actual moment of attack.

Great credit is due also to the Royal Flying Corps for very gallant and most valuable work carried out under conditions of the greatest difficulty from low clouds and driving mist.

In the subsidiary attack at Bullecourt battalions of the 3rd Division and the 16th (Irish) Division successfully completed the work begun by our operations in this area in May and June 1917, capturing the remainder of the Hindenburg support trench on their front, with some 700 prisoners. A number of counter-attacks against our new positions at Bullecourt on this and the following day were repulsed, with great loss to the enemy.

#### THE ADVANCE CONTINUED.

(4) On the morning of the 21st November the attack on Flesquières was resumed, and by 8.0 a.m. the village had been turned from the north-west and captured. The ob-

stacle which more than anything else had limited the results of the 20th November was thereby removed, and later in the morning the advance once more became general.

Masnières had been cleared of the enemy during the previous evening, and at 11.0 a.m. our troops attacked the Beaurevoir-Masnières line and established themselves in the portion to the east and north of Masnières. Heavy fighting took place, and a counter-attack from the direction of Rumilly was beaten off. At the same hour we attacked and captured Les Rues des Vignes, but later in the morning the enemy counter-attacked and compelled our troops to fall back from this position. Progress was also made towards Crevecoeur; but though the canal was crossed during the afternoon, it was found impossible to force the passage of the river in face of the enemy's machine-gun fire.

That evening orders were issued by the Third Army to secure the ground already gained in this area of the battle, and to capture Rumilly on the morrow; but in consequence of the exhaustion of the troops engaged it was found necessary later in the night to cancel the orders for this attack.

West of the Canal de l'Escaut infantry of the 29th Division and dismounted regiments of the 1st and 5th Cavalry Divisions, including the Ambala Brigade, were heavily engaged throughout the day in Noyelles, and beat off all attacks in continuous fighting.

Following upon the capture of Flesquières, the 51st and 62nd Divisions, in co-operation with a number of tanks and squadrons of the 1st Cavalry Division, attacked at 10.30 a.m. in the direction of Fontaine-notre-Dame and Bourlon.

In this attack the capture of Anneux was completed, and early in the afternoon Cantaing was seized, with some hundreds of prisoners. Progress was made on the outskirts of Bourlon Wood, and late in the afternoon Fontaine-notre-Dame was taken by troops of the 51st Division and tanks. The attack on Bourlon Wood itself was checked by machine-gun fire, though tanks advanced some distance into the wood.

Farther west, the 36th Division advanced north of the Bapaume-Cambrai road, and reached the southern outskirts of Mœuvres, where strong opposition was encountered.

#### THE POSITION ON THE 21ST NOVEMBER.

(5) On the evening of the second day of the attack, therefore, our troops held a line which ran approximately as follows :—

From our old front line east of Gonnelleu the right flank of our new positions lay along the eastern slopes of the Bonavis Ridge, passing east of Lateau Wood and striking the Masnières-Beaurevoir line north of the Canal de l'Escaut at a point about half way between Crevecoeur and Masnières. From this point our line ran roughly north-west, past and including Masnières, Noyelles and Cantaing, to Fontaine, also inclusive. Thence it bent back to the south for a short distance, making a sharp salient round the latter village, and ran in a general westerly direction along the southern edge of Bourlon Wood and across the southern face of the spur to the west of the wood, to the Canal du Nord, south-east of the village of Mœuvres. From Mœuvres the line linked up once more with our old front at a point about midway between Bourcies and Pronville.

The forty-eight hours after which it had been calculated that the enemy's reserves would begin to arrive had in effect expired, and the high ground at Bourlon village and wood, as well as certain important tactical features to the east and west of the wood, still remained in the enemy's possession. It now became necessary to decide whether to continue the operation offensively or to take up a defensive attitude and rest content with what had been attained.

#### THE DECISION TO GO ON.

(6) It was not possible, however, to let matters stand as they were. The positions captured by us north of Flesquières were completely commanded by the Bourlon Ridge, and unless

this ridge were gained it would be impossible to hold them, except at excessive cost. If I decided not to go on a withdrawal to the Flesquières Ridge would be necessary, and would have to be carried out at once.

On the other hand, the enemy showed certain signs of an intention to withdraw. Craters had been formed at road junctions, and troops could be seen ready to move east. The possession of Bourlon Ridge would enable our troops to obtain observation over the ground to the north, which sloped gently down to the Sensée River. The enemy's defensive lines south of the Scarpe and Sensée Rivers would thereby be turned, his communications exposed to the observed fire of our artillery, and his positions in this sector jeopardized. In short, so great was the importance of the ridge to the enemy that its loss would probably cause the abandonment by the Germans of their carefully prepared defence systems for a considerable distance to the north of it.

The successive days of constant marching and fighting had placed a very severe strain upon the endurance of the troops, and, before a further advance could be undertaken, some time would have to be spent in resting and relieving them. This need for delay was regrettable, as the enemy's forces were increasing, and fresh German divisions were known to be arriving, but, with the limited number of troops at my command, it was unavoidable.

It was to be remembered, however, that the hostile reinforcements coming up at this stage could at first be no more than enough to replace the enemy's losses : and although the right of our advance had definitely been stayed, the enemy had not yet developed such strength about Bourlon as it seemed might not be overcome by the numbers at my disposal. As has already been pointed out, on the Cambrai side of the battlefield I had only aimed at securing a defensive flank to enable the advance to be pushed northwards and north-westwards, and this part of my task had been to a large extent achieved.

An additional and very important argument in favour of proceeding with my attack was supplied by the situation in Italy, upon which a continuance of pressure on the Cambrai front might reasonably be expected to exercise an important effect, no matter what measure of success attended my efforts. Moreover, two divisions previously under orders for Italy had on this day been placed at my disposal, and with this accession of strength the prospect of securing Bourlon seemed good.

After weighing these various considerations, therefore, I decided to continue the operations to gain the Bourlon position.

The 22nd November was spent in organizing the captured ground, in carrying out certain reliefs, and in giving other troops the rest they greatly needed. Soon after midday the enemy regained Fontaine-notre-Dame ; but, with our troops already on the outskirts of Bourlon Wood and Cantaing held by us, it was thought that the recapture of Fontaine should not prove very difficult. The necessary arrangements for renewing the attack were therefore pushed on, and our plans were extended to include the recapture of Fontaine-notre-Dame.

Meanwhile, early in the night of the 22nd November, a battalion of the Queen's Westminsters stormed a commanding tactical point in the Hindenburg Line west of Mœuvres known as Tadpole Copse, the possession of which would be of value in connection with the left flank of the Bourlon position when the latter had been secured.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR BOURLON RIDGE.

(7) On the morning of the 23rd November the 51st Division, supported by tanks, attacked Fontaine-notre-Dame, but was unable to force an entrance. Early in the afternoon this division repeated its attack from the west, and a number of tanks entered Fontaine, where they remained till dusk, inflicting considerable loss on the enemy. We did not suc-

ceeded, however, in clearing the village, and at the end of the day no progress had been made on this part of our front.

At 10.30 a.m. the 40th Division attacked Bourlon Wood, and after four and a half hours of hard fighting, in which tanks again rendered valuable assistance to our infantry, captured the whole of the wood and entered Bourlon Village. Here hostile counter-attacks prevented our further progress, and though the village was at one time reported to have been taken by us, this proved later to be erroneous. A heavy hostile attack upon our positions in the wood, in which all three battalions of the 9th Grenadier Regiment appear to have been employed, was completely repulsed.

Throughout this day, also, the 36th Division and troops of the 56th (London) Division (T.) were engaged in stubborn fighting in the neighbourhood of Mœuvres and Tadpole Copse, and made some progress.

This struggle for Bourlon resulted in several days of fiercely contested fighting, in which English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish battalions, together with dismounted cavalry, performed most gallant service and inflicted heavy loss on the enemy.

During the morning of the 24th November the enemy twice attacked, and at his second attempt pressed back our troops in the north-eastern corner of the wood. An immediate counter-attack delivered by the 14th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the 15th Hussars, dismounted, and the remnants of the 119th Infantry Brigade, drove back the enemy in turn, and by noon our line had been re-established. Meanwhile dismounted cavalry had repulsed an attack on the high ground west of Bourlon Wood, and in the afternoon a third hostile attack upon the wood was stopped by our artillery and rifle fire.

On this afternoon our infantry again attacked Bourlon Village, and captured the whole of it. Later in the evening a fourth attack upon our positions in the wood was beaten off after fierce fighting. Further progress was made on this

day in the Hindenburg Line west of Mœuvres, but the enemy's resistance in the whole of this area was very strong.

On the evening of the 25th November a fresh attack by the enemy regained Bourlon Village, though our troops offered vigorous resistance, and parties of the 13th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment, held out in the south-east corner of the village until touch was re-established with them two days later. The continual fighting and the strength of the enemy's attacks, however, had told heavily on the 40th Division, which had borne the brunt of the struggle. This division was accordingly withdrawn, and on the following day our troops were again pressed back slightly in the northern outskirts of Bourlon Wood.

With the enemy in possession of the shoulder of the ridge above Fontaine-notre-Dame, as well as of part of the high ground west of Bourlon Wood, our position in the wood itself was a difficult one, and much of the ground to the south of it was still exposed to the enemy's observation. It was decided, therefore, to make another effort on the 27th November to capture Fontaine-notre-Dame and Bourlon Village, and to gain possession of the whole of the Bourlon Ridge.

In this attack, in which tanks co-operated, British Guards temporarily regained possession of Fontaine-notre-Dame, taking some hundreds of prisoners, and troops of the 62nd Division once more entered Bourlon Village. Later in the morning, however, heavy counter-attacks developed in both localities, and our troops were enabled to maintain the ground they had gained. During the afternoon the enemy also attacked our positions at Tadpole Copse, but was repulsed.

As the result of five days of constant fighting, therefore, we held a strong position on the Bourlon Hill and in the wood, but had not yet succeeded in gaining all the ground required for the security of this important feature. The two following days passed comparatively quietly, while the troops engaged were relieved and steps were undertaken to prepare for a deliberate attack which might give us the tactical points we sought.

Meanwhile, on other parts of the front the organization of our new positions was proceeding as rapidly as conditions would allow. In particular, troops of the 12th Division had effected some improvement on the right flank of our advance opposite Banteux, and the 16th Division had made further progress in the Hindenburg Line north-west of Bullecourt.

At the end of November the number of prisoners taken in our operations south-west of Cambrai exceeded 10,500. We had also captured 142 guns, some 350 machine guns, and 70 trench mortars, with great quantities of ammunition, material and stores of all kinds.

#### THE GERMAN ATTACK: EARLY WARNINGS.

(8) During the last days of November increased registration of hostile artillery, the movements of troops and transport observed behind the German lines, together with other indications of a like nature, pointed to further efforts by the enemy to regain the positions we had wrested from him.

The front affected by this increased activity included that of our advance, as well as the ground to Vendhuille and beyond. The massing of the enemy's infantry," however, his obvious anxiety concerning the security of his defences south of the Sensée River, the tactical importance of the high ground about Bourlon, and the fact that we were still only in partial possession of it, all pointed to the principal attack being delivered in the Bourlon sector.

#### OUR DISPOSITIONS FOR DEFENCE.

(9) Measures were accordingly taken, both by the Third Army and by the lower formations concerned, to prepare for eventualities. Arrangements had been made after our last attack to relieve the troops holding the Bourlon positions by such fresh divisions as were available, and when these reliefs had been satisfactorily completed, I felt confident that the defence of this sector could be considered secure.

Covering our right flank from Cantaing to the Banteux

Ravine, a distance of about 16,000 yards, five British divisions were disposed, and, though these had been fighting for several days and were consequently tired, I felt confident that they would prove equal to stopping any attack the enemy could make on them.

From the Banteux Ravine southwards the divisions in line were weak and held very extended fronts. On the other hand, the line held by us in this southern sector had been in our possession for some months. Its defences were for this reason more complete and better organized than those of the ground gained by us in our attack. Moreover, the capture of the Bonavis Ridge had added to the security of our position farther south.

The reserve divisions immediately available in the area consisted of the Guards and 2nd Cavalry Divisions, both of which had been engaged in the recent fighting at Fontaine and Bourlon Wood. These were located behind the La Vacquerie-Villers Guislain front, while another division, the 62nd, which had also been recently engaged, was placed farther to the north-west in the direction of the Bapaume-Cambrai road. A fresh South Midland Division was assembling farther back, two other cavalry divisions were within from two to three hours' march of the battle area, and another cavalry division but a little farther distant.

In view of the symptoms of activity observed on the enemy's front, special precautions were taken by local commanders, especially from Villers Guislain to the south. Troops were warned to expect attack, additional machine guns were placed to secure supporting points, and divisional reserves were closed up. Special patrols were also sent out to watch for signs of any hostile advance.

#### THE BATTLE REOPENED.

(10) Between the hours of 7 and 8 a.m. on the last day of November the enemy attacked, after a short but intense artillery preparation, on the greater part of a front of some

ten miles from Vendhuille to Masnières inclusive. From Masnières to Banteux, both inclusive, four German divisions would seem to have been employed against the three British divisions holding this area. Between Banteux exclusive and Vendhuille one German division and portions of two others were employed against the northern half of the British division holding that front.

On the Masnières front the 29th Division, composed of English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Guernsey and Newfoundland battalions, although seriously threatened as the day wore on by the progress made by the enemy farther south, where their battery positions had been taken in reverse, most gallantly beat off a succession of powerful assaults, and maintained their line intact.

At the northern end of the Bonavis Ridge and in the Gonnelieu sector the swiftness with which the advance of the enemy's infantry followed the opening of his bombardment appears to have overwhelmed our troops, both in line and in immediate support, almost before they had realized that the attack had begun.

The nature of the bombardment, which seems to have been heavy enough to keep our men under cover without at first seriously alarming them, contributed to the success of the enemy's plans. No steadily advancing barrage gave warning of the approach of the German assault columns, whose secret assembly was assisted by the many deep folds and hollows typical of a chalk formation, and shielded from observation from the air by an early morning mist. Only when the attack was upon them great numbers of low-flying German aeroplanes rained machine-gun fire upon our infantry, while an extensive use of smoke shell and bombs made it extremely difficult for our troops to see what was happening on other parts of the battlefield, or to follow the movements of the enemy. In short, there is little doubt that, although an attack was expected generally, yet in these areas of the battle at the moment of delivery the assault effected a local surprise.

None the less, stubborn resistance was offered during the morning by isolated parties of our troops and by machine-gun detachments in the neighbourhood of Lateau Wood and south-east of La Vacquerie, as well as at other points. In more than one instance heavy losses are known to have been inflicted on the enemy by machine-gun fire at short range. North-east of La Vacquerie the 92nd Field Artillery Brigade repulsed four attacks, in some of which the enemy's infantry approached to within 200 yards of our guns before the surviving gunners were finally compelled to withdraw, after removing the breech-blocks from their pieces. East of Villers Guislain the troops holding our forward positions on the high ground were still offering a strenuous resistance to the enemy's attack on their front at a time when large forces of German infantry had already advanced up the valley between them and Villers Guislain. South of this village a single strong point known as Limerick Post, garrisoned by troops of the 1/5th Bn. (King's Own), Royal Lancaster Regiment, and the 1/10th Bn., Liverpool Regiment, held out with great gallantry throughout the day, though heavily attacked.

The progress made by the enemy, however, across the northern end of the Bonavis Ridge and up the deep gully between Villers Guislain and Gonnelleu, known as 22 Ravine, turned our positions on the ridge as well as in both villages. Taken in flank and rear, the defences of Villers Guislain, Gonnelleu, and Bonavis were rapidly overrun. Gouzeaucourt was captured about 9.0 a.m., the outer defences of La Vacquerie were reached, and a number of guns which had been brought up close to the line in order to enable them to cover the battle-front about Masnières and Marcoing fell into the hands of the enemy.

At this point the enemy's advance was checked by the action of our local reserves, and meanwhile measures had been taken with all possible speed to bring up additional troops. About midday the Guards came into action west of Gouzeaucourt, while cavalry moved up to close the gap on their right

and made progress towards Villers Guislain from the south and south-west.

The attack of the Guards, which was delivered with the greatest gallantry and resolution, drove the enemy out of Gouzeaucourt and made progress on the high ground known as the St. Quentin Ridge, east of the village. In this operation the Guards were materially assisted by the gallant action of a party of the 29th Division, who, with a company of North Midland Royal Engineers, held on throughout the day to a position in an old trench near Gouzeaucourt. Valuable work was also done by a brigade of field artillery of the 47th Division, which moved direct into action from the line of march.

During the afternoon three battalions of tanks, which when they received news of the attack were preparing to move away from the battlefield to refit, arrived at Gouzeaucourt and aided the infantry to hold the recaptured ground. Great credit is due to the officers and men of the Tank Brigade concerned for the speed with which they brought their tanks into action.

Meanwhile, the defence of La Vacquerie had been successfully maintained, and our line had been established to the north of that village, in touch with our troops in Masnières.

#### THE NORTHERN ATTACK.

(ii) In the northern area, from Fontaine-notre-Dame to Tadpole Copse, the German attack was not launched until some two hours later. This was the enemy's main attack, and was carried out with large forces and great resolution.

After a heavy preliminary bombardment, and covered by an artillery barrage, the enemy's infantry advanced shortly after 9 a.m. in dense waves, in the manner of his attacks in the first battle of Ypres. In the course of the morning and afternoon no less than five principal attacks were made in this area, and on one portion of the attack as many as eleven waves of German infantry advanced successively to the assault. On the whole of this front a resolute endeavour was

made to break down by sheer weight of numbers the defence of the London Territorials and other English battalions holding the sector.

In this fighting the 47th (London) Division (T.), the 2nd Division and the 56th (London) Division (T.) greatly distinguished themselves, and there were accomplished many deeds of great heroism.

Under the fury of the enemy's bombardment a company of the 17th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, were in the course of being withdrawn from an exposed position in a sap-head in advance of our line between Bourlon Wood and Mœuvres when the German attack burst upon them. The officer in command sent three of his platoons back, and with a rearguard composed of the remainder of his company held off the enemy's infantry until the main position had been organized. Having faithfully accomplished their task, this rearguard died fighting to the end with their faces to the enemy.

Somewhat later in the morning an attack in force between the Canal du Nord and Mœuvres broke into our foremost positions and isolated a company of the 13th Battalion, Essex Regiment, in a trench just west of the canal. After maintaining a splendid and successful resistance throughout the day, whereby the pressure upon our main line was greatly relieved, at 4 p.m. this company held a council of war, at which the two remaining company officers, the company sergeant-major, and the platoon sergeants were present, and unanimously determined to fight to the last and have "no surrender." Two runners who were sent to notify this decision to Battalion Headquarters succeeded in getting through to our lines and delivered their message. During the remainder of the afternoon and far into the following night this gallant company were heard fighting, and there is little room for doubt that they carried out to a man their heroic resolution.

Early in the afternoon large masses of the enemy again attacked west of Bourlon Wood, and, though beaten off with

great loss at most points, succeeded in overwhelming three out of a line of posts held by a company of the 1st Battalion Royal Berks Regiment, on the right of the 2nd Division. Though repeatedly attacked by vastly superior numbers the remainder of these posts stood firm, and when, two days later, the three posts which had been overpowered were regained, such a heap of German dead lay in and around them that the bodies of our own men were hidden.

All accounts go to show that the enemy's losses in the whole of his constantly repeated attacks on this sector of the battle front were enormous. One battery of eight machine guns fired 70,000 rounds of ammunition into ten successive waves of Germans. Long lines of attacking infantry were caught by our machine-gun fire in enfilade, and were shot down in line as they advanced. Great execution also was done by our field artillery, and in the course of the battle guns were brought up to the crest line and fired direct upon the enemy at short range.

At one point west of Bourlon the momentum of his first advance carried the enemy through our front line and a short way down the southern slopes of the ridge. There, however, the German masses came under direct fire from our field artillery at short range and were broken up. Our local reserves at once counter-attacked, and succeeded in closing the gap that had been made in our line. Early in the afternoon the enemy again forced his way into our foremost positions in this locality, opening a gap between the 1/6th Battalion and the 1/15th Battalion, London Regiments. Counter-attacks, led by the two battalion commanders, with all available men, including the personnel of their headquarters, once more restored the situation. All other attacks were beaten off with the heaviest losses to the enemy.

The greatest credit is due to the troops at Masnières, Bourlon and Mœuvres for the very gallant service performed by them on this day. But for their steady courage and staunchness in defence, the success gained by the enemy on

the right of our battle front might have had serious consequences.

I cannot close the account of this day's fighting without recording my obligation to the Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies for the prompt way in which he placed French troops within reach for employment in case of need at the unfettered discretion of the Third Army Commander. Part of the artillery of this force actually came into action, rendering valuable service, and though the remainder of the troops were not called upon, the knowledge that they were available should occasion arise was a great assistance.

#### THE FIGHTING AT GONNELIEU AND MASNIÈRES.

(12) On the 1st December fighting continued fiercely on the whole front.

The Guards completed the capture of the St. Quentin Ridge and entered Gonnelleiu, where they captured over 350 prisoners and a large number of machine guns. Tanks took an effective part in the fighting for the ridge. At one point, where our infantry were held up by fire from a hostile trench, a single tank attacked and operated up and down the trench, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy's garrison. Our infantry were then able to advance and secure the trench, which was found full of dead Germans. In it were also found fifteen machine guns that had been silenced by the tank. In the whole of this fighting splendid targets were obtained by all tank crews, and the German casualties were seen to be very great.

Farther south, a number of tanks co-operated with dismounted Indian cavalry of the 5th Cavalry Division and with the Guards in the attacks upon Villers Guislain and Gauche Wood, and were in great measure responsible for the capture of the wood. Heavy fighting took place for this position, which it is clear that the enemy had decided to hold at all costs. When the infantry and cavalry finally took possession of the wood, great numbers of German dead and smashed

machine guns were found. In one spot four German machine guns, with dead crews lying round, were discovered within a radius of twenty yards. Three German field guns, complete with teams, were also captured in this wood.

Other tanks proceeded to Villers Guislain, and, in spite of heavy direct artillery fire, three reached the outskirts of the village, but the fire of the enemy's machine guns prevented our troops advancing from the south from supporting them, and the tanks ultimately withdrew.

Severe fighting took place also at Masnières. During the afternoon and evening at least nine separate attacks were beaten off by the 29th Division on this front, and other hostile attacks were repulsed in the neighbourhood of Marcoing, Fontaine-notre-Dame, and Bourlon. With the Bonavis Ridge in the enemy's hands, however, Masnières was exposed to attack on three sides, and on the night of the 1st-2nd December our troops were withdrawn under orders to a line west of the village.

On the afternoon of the 2nd December a series of heavy attacks developed against Welsh Ridge in the neighbourhood of La Vacquerie, and further assaults were made on our positions in the neighbourhood of Masnières and Bourlon. These attacks were broken in succession by our machine-gun fire, but the enemy persisted in his attempts against Welsh Ridge and gradually gained ground. By nightfall our line had been pushed back to a position west and north of Gonnelleiu.

Next day the enemy renewed his attacks in great force on the whole front from Gonnelleiu to Marcoing, and ultimately gained possession of La Vacquerie. North of La Vacquerie repeated attacks made about Masnières and Marcoing were repulsed in severe fighting, but the positions still retained by us beyond the Canal de l'Escaut were extremely exposed, and during the night our troops were withdrawn under orders to the west bank of the canal.

## THE WITHDRAWAL FROM BOURLON.

(13) By this time the enemy had evidently become exhausted by the efforts he had made and the severity of his losses, and the 4th December passed comparatively quietly. For some days, however, local fighting continued in the neighbourhood of La Vacquerie, and his attitude remained aggressive. Local attacks in this sector were repulsed on the 5th December, and on this and the following two days further fierce fighting took place, in which the enemy again endeavoured without success to drive us from our positions on Welsh Ridge.

The strength which the enemy had shown himself able to develop in his attacks made it evident that only by prolonged and severe fighting could I hope to re-establish my right flank on the Bonavis Ridge. Unless this was done, the situation of my troops in the salient north of Flesquières would be difficult and dangerous, even if our hold on Bourlon Hill were extended.

I had therefore to decide either to embark on another offensive battle on a large scale, or to withdraw to a more compact line on the Flesquières Ridge.

Although this decision involved giving up important positions most gallantly won, I had no doubt as to the correct course under the conditions. Accordingly, on the night of the 4th-5th December the evacuation of the positions held by us north of the Flesquières Ridge was commenced. On the morning of the 7th December this withdrawal was completed successfully without interference from the enemy.

Before withdrawing the more important of the enemy's field defences were destroyed, and those of his guns which we had been unable to remove were rendered useless. The enemy did not discover our withdrawal for some time, and when, on the afternoon of the 5th December, he began to feel his way forward, he did so with great caution. In spite of his care, on more than one occasion bodies of his infantry were caught in the open by our artillery.

Much skill and courage were shown by our covering troops in this withdrawal, and an incident which occurred on the afternoon of the 6th December in the neighbourhood of Graincourt deserves special notice. A covering party, consisting of two companies of the 1/15th Battalion, London Regiment, 47th Division, much reduced in strength by the fighting at Bourlon Wood, found their flank exposed by a hostile attack farther east, and were enveloped and practically cut off. These companies successfully cut their way through to our advanced line of resistance, where they arrived in good order, after having inflicted serious casualties on the enemy.

The new line taken up by us corresponded roughly to the old Hindenburg Reserve Line, and ran from a point about one and a half miles north by east of La Vacquerie, north of Ribecourt and Flesquières to the Canal du Nord, about one and a half miles north of Havrincourt—*i.e.*, between two and two and a half miles in front of the line held by us prior to the attack of the 20th November. We therefore retained in our possession an important section of the Hindenburg trench system, with its excellent dug-outs and other advantages.

#### THE RESULTS OF THE BATTLE.

(14) The material results of the three weeks' fighting described above can be stated in general terms very shortly.

We had captured and retained in our possession over 12,000 yards of the former German front line from La Vacquerie to a point opposite Boursies, together with between 10,000 and 11,000 yards of the Hindenburg Line and Hindenburg Reserve Line and the villages of Ribecourt, Flesquières and Havrincourt. A total of 145 German guns were taken or destroyed by us in the course of the operations, and 11,100 German prisoners were captured.

On the other hand, the enemy had occupied an unimportant section of our front line between Vendhuille and Gonnelleu.

There is little doubt that our operations were of considerable indirect assistance to the Allied forces in Italy. Large demands were made upon the available German reserves at a time when a great concentration of German Divisions was still being maintained in Flanders. There is evidence that German Divisions intended for the Italian theatre were diverted to the Cambrai front, and it is probable that the further concentration of German forces against Italy was suspended for at least two weeks at a most critical period, when our Allies were making their first stand on the Piave Line.

#### GENERAL REVIEW.

(15) I have already summarized in the opening paragraphs of this Dispatch both the reasons which decided me to undertake the Cambrai operations and the limitations to which those operations were subject.

In view of the strength of the German forces on the front of my attack, and the success with which secrecy was maintained during our preparations, I had calculated that the enemy's prepared defences would be captured in the first rush. I had good hope that his resisting power behind those defences would then be so enfeebled for a period that we should be able on the same day to establish ourselves quickly and completely on the dominating Bourlon Ridge from Fontaine-notre-Dame to Mœuvres, and to secure our right flank along a line including the Bonavis Ridge, Crevecœur and Rumilly to Fontaine-notre-Dame. Even if this did not prove possible within the first twenty-four hours, a second day would be at our disposal before the enemy's reserves could begin to arrive in any formidable numbers.

Meanwhile, with no wire and no prepared defences to hamper them, it was reasonable to hope that masses of cavalry would find it possible to pass through, whose task would be thoroughly to disorganize the enemy's systems of command and inter-communication in the whole area between the Canal

de l'Escaut, the River Sensée and the Canal du Nord, as well as to the east and north-east of Cambrai.

My intentions as regards subsequent exploitation were to push westward and north-westward, taking the Hindenburg Line in reverse from Mœuvres to the River Scarpe, and capturing all the enemy's defences and probably most of his garrisons lying west of a line from Cambrai northwards to the Sensée, and south of that river and the Scarpe.

Time would have been required to enable us to develop and complete the operation ; but the prospects of gaining the necessary time, by the use of cavalry in the manner outlined above, were in my opinion good enough to justify the attempt to execute the plan. I am of opinion that on the 20th and 21st November we went very near to a success sufficiently complete to bring the realization of our full programme within our power.

The reasons for my decision to continue the fight after the 21st November have already been explained. Though in the event no advantage was gained thereby, I still consider that, as the problem presented itself at the time, the more cautious course would have been difficult to justify. It must be remembered that it was not a question of remaining where we stood, but of abandoning tactical positions of value, gained with great gallantry, the retention of which seemed not only to be within our power, but likely even yet to lead to further success.

Whatever may be the final decision on this point, as well as on the original decision to undertake the enterprise at all with the forces available, the continuation of our efforts against Fontaine-notre-Dame gave rise to severe fighting, in which our troops more than held their own.

On the 30th November risks were accepted by us at some points in order to increase our strength at others. Our fresh reserves had been thrown in on the Bourlon front, where the enemy brought against us a total force of seven divisions to three and failed. I do not consider that it would have been

justifiable on the indications to have allotted a smaller garrison to this front.

Between Masnières and Vendhuille the enemy's superiority in infantry over our divisions in line was in the proportion of about four to three, and we were sufficiently provided with artillery. That his attack was partially successful may tend to show that the garrison allotted to this front was insufficient, either owing to want of numbers, lack of training, or exhaustion from previous fighting.

Captured maps and orders have made it clear that the enemy aimed at far more considerable results than were actually achieved by him. Three convergent attacks were to be made on the salient formed by our advance; two of them delivered approximately simultaneously about Gonnelieu and Masnières, followed later by a still more powerful attack on the Bourlon front. The objectives of these attacks extended to the high ground at Beaucamp and Trescault, and the enemy's hope was to capture and destroy the whole of the British forces in the Cambrai salient.

This bold and ambitious plan was foiled on the greater part of our front by the splendid defence of the British divisions engaged; and, though the defence broke down for a time in one area, the recovery made by the weak forces still left and those within immediate reach is worthy of the highest praise. Numberless instances of great gallantry, promptitude and skill were shown, some few of which have been recounted.

I desire to acknowledge the skill and resource displayed by General Byng throughout the Cambrai operations, and to express my appreciation of the manner in which they were conducted by him, as well as by his Staff and the subordinate commanders.

In conclusion, I would point out that the sudden breaking through by our troops of an immense system of defence has had a most inspiring moral effect on the Armies I command, and must have a correspondingly depressing influence upon

the enemy. The great value of the tanks in the offensive has been conclusively proved. In view of this experience, the enemy may well hesitate to deplete any portion of his front, as he did last summer, in order to set free troops to concentrate for decisive action at some other point.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,  
Your obedient Servant,

D. HAIG, Field-Marshal,  
Commanding-in-Chief,  
British Armies in France.

## APPENDIX V.

---

### THE CAVALRY AT CAMBRAI.

THE following Dispatch from Sir Douglas Haig, dated 10th March, has been received from the War Office :—

I have the honour to forward herewith short detailed statements of the action of the 5th Cavalry Division on 20th and 21st November, and of the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions on 30th November and following days.

The principal actions in which Indian cavalry took part and rendered most gallant and valuable service were the defence of Noyelles on 21st November and the capture of Gauche Wood on 1st December. Both these incidents are referred to in the published dispatch. Great gallantry was shown also by the units concerned in the mounted attacks on Villers-Guislain on 1st December, but these operations did not meet with any substantial measure of success.

#### • OPERATIONS OF 5TH CAVALRY DIVISION (Canadian, Ambala, and Secunderabad Brigades) on 20th November and subsequent days.

The 5th Cavalry Division received orders at noon on 20th November to move forward to the canal crossings at Masnières and Marcoing, and the advance guard of the Canadian Brigade reached the southern outskirts of Masnières at about 1.40 p.m. At 1.45 p.m. the advance guard of the Secundera-

bad Brigade reached the southern outskirts of Marcoing. Our infantry were in both villages, but the enemy was still holding the northern portion of Masnières.

A squadron of the Secunderabad Brigade crossed the Canal de l'Escaut at Marcoing at 2 p.m., and, finding the Masnières-Beaurevoir line held by the enemy, dismounted and prolonged the right flank of our infantry.

At Masnières a temporary bridge was constructed across the canal, and at 3.30 p.m. a squadron of Fort Garry Horse crossed under fire at this point. Their action is fully reported in the Cambrai Dispatch.

On the morning of 21st November the Canadian Brigade attempted to cross the canal at Masnières, but was prevented by the development of a heavy hostile counter-attack. The enemy was also strongly counter-attacking our infantry and the 1st Cavalry Division in Noyelles, and early in the afternoon the Ambala Brigade was sent to their support. This brigade was of material assistance in the defence of the place.

During the night of 21st-22nd November the orders for continuing the attack in the direction of Rumilly were cancelled, and orders were issued for the withdrawal of the 5th Cavalry Division.

#### OPERATIONS OF 4TH CAVALRY DIVISION (Mhow, Lucknow, and Sialkot Brigades) AND 5TH CAVALRY DIVISION (Canadian, Ambala, and Secunderabad Brigades) on 30<sup>th</sup> November and following days.

On the morning of 30th November the 5th Cavalry Division was at Monchy-Lagacho, and the 4th Cavalry Division at Athies, whence it was on the point of moving into line in relief of the 24th Division.

The first news of the German attack was received at 8.30 a.m., and both Divisions were ordered to stand to. At 9 a.m. the 5th Cavalry Division was ordered to Villers-Faucon, followed by the 4th Cavalry Division.

The head of the 5th Cavalry Division arrived at Villers-

Faucon at 12.15 p.m., and orders were issued for the division to attack towards the line Villers-Guislain-Gouzeaucourt, with the 4th Cavalry Division in support.

The 5th Cavalry Division attacked with the Ambala Brigade and Secunderabad Brigade, the Ambala Brigade being directed on Gauche Wood, with the Secunderabad Brigade, on its left, directed on Gouzeaucourt. The Canadian Brigade was in reserve.

The Ambala Brigade reached Vauclotte Farm, south of Gauche Wood, at about 2.30 p.m., and found the farm held by our infantry. A position was gained about 1,000 yards west of Gauche Wood, but further progress was stopped by machine-gun fire and by a hostile counter-attack, which, however, was beaten off.

The Secunderabad Brigade reached Gouzeaucourt, which had already been taken by the Guards Division, and sent out patrols towards Gonnelle and to establish connection between the left of the Guards Division and the 20th Division.

By this time the Canadian Brigade had come into line, on the right of the Ambala Brigade, just east of Vauclotte Farm. The Lucknow Brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division was ordered up to cover the right flank of the 5th Cavalry Division.

On the morning of 1st December the 5th Cavalry Division, with the Lucknow Brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division, attacked Gauche Wood and Villers-Guislain, dismounted, in co-operation with the right of the Guards Division and a number of tanks. The Ambala Brigade, Guards, and tanks by 8.30 a.m. had captured Gauche Wood, where they were reinforced by the Secunderabad Brigade. The Lucknow Brigade attacking Villers-Guislain did not get in touch with its tanks, and was held up by machine-gun fire.

Farther west, the 4th Cavalry Division attacked the ridge running south-east from Villers-Guislain with the Mhow Brigade, the Sialkot Brigade being in support. The 2nd Lancers advanced at the gallop at 9 a.m. under very heavy

fire, and captured Kildare Trench, about one-and-a-half mile south by east of Villers-Guislain. Three squadrons of the Inniskilling Dragoons also advanced at the gallop towards Villers-Guislain from the south-west, but came under very heavy fire and were compelled to withdraw. At night the troops in Kildare Trench were also withdrawn.

Meanwhile, at 3 p.m., the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions again attacked towards Villers-Guislain. Chapel Crossing, south-east of Vauclotte Farm, was taken by the Canadian Brigade, but further progress was stopped by hostile machine-gun fire and a heavy counter-attack from Villers-Guislain.

The line gained was held during the night of 1st-2nd December by the Sialkot and Secunderabad Brigades. The 2nd December passed without incident, and on the night of 2nd-3rd December both Divisions were relieved by the 1st Cavalry Division.

## APPENDIX VI.

---

### THE CONQUEST OF KILIMANJARO.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SMUTS'S FIRST DISPATCH.\*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
EAST AFRICA, 30th April 1916.

MY LORD,

In accordance with your instructions, I assumed command of His Majesty's Forces in East Africa on the 12th February, and sailed from South Africa on that day.

I arrived at Mombasa on the 19th of February, and was met there by Major-General Tighe, who explained to me fully the situation in East Africa and the steps he had taken to push forward all preparations for an operation in the Kilimanjaro area before the rains. I decided to visit immediately the two proposed lines of advance by Mbuyuni and Longido, and to

\* The East African dispatches include, besides the two of General Smuts's here printed, one from Lord Buxton, the High Commissioner of South Africa, describing the operations of the Rhodesian force and the Tanganyika Naval Expedition; one from General Northey, continuing the narrative to the beginning of 1917; one from General Hoskins, covering the period between January and May 1917; and one from General Van Deventer, describing the operations between May and November 1917, after he had taken over the command from General Hoskins.

make a personal reconnaissance in company with General Tighe.

As a result of this reconnaissance I cabled your Lordship, on arrival at my General Headquarters in Nairobi on 23rd February, that I was prepared to carry out the occupation of the Kilimanjaro area before the rainy season, and received your sanction on 25th February.

2. It will, I think, assist a clear understanding of this Dispatch if I here briefly recapitulate the outstanding features of the military situation in East Africa, and also the steps recently taken by General Tighe towards the development of the advance into German territory which was made possible by the arrival of the reinforcements from South Africa.

At the commencement of 1916 the German forces in German East Africa were estimated at some 16,000 men, of whom 2,000 were white, with 60 guns and 80 machine guns. They were organized in companies varying from 150 to 200 strong, with 10 per cent. of whites and an average of two machine guns per company.

The enemy occupied a considerable tract of British territory. At Taveta they had established a large entrenched camp, with an advanced position at Salaita (El Oldorobo), an entrenched camp at Serengeti, and an outpost at Mbuyuni, the latter places thirteen and seventeen miles respectively east of Taveta. At Kasigau they maintained a garrison of 500-600 rifles, with the object of delaying our concentration by blowing up the Uganda railway and the Voi-Maktau railway. Their numerous attempts to accomplish this end were uniformly futile. In the coastal area they maintained a considerable garrison on the Umba River, and actively patrolled thence to the vicinity of the Uganda railway, Mwele Mdogo, and Gazi. At numerous points throughout the 600 miles of land frontier the opposing troops were in touch, and the result was that General Tighe had to disseminate widely his small force, and was unable to keep any large reserve in hand to meet a sudden call.

## GENERAL TIGHE'S GOOD WORK.

In spite of the fact that he had to be constantly on the watch for the next move of his active and enterprising foe, General Tighe kept steadily before him the necessity of doing all in his power to prepare the way for the eventual offensive movement. With this end in view he organized such of his infantry as could be spared for active operations into the 1st and 2nd East African Brigades, acting on the Taveta and Longido lines respectively, and proceeded to develop the organization of the whole force into two divisions and line of communication troops.

3. On the 15th January the 1st Division, under Major-General Stewart, was ordered to occupy Longido, and to develop the lines of communication between that place and Kajiado, on the Magadi railway. On the 22nd January the 2nd Division, under Brigadier-General Malleson, advanced from Maktau to Mbuyuni, meeting with slight opposition, and on the 24th occupied Serengeti camp. This advance had the immediate effect of making the enemy evacuate Kasigau. The railway was advanced from Maktau to Njoro drift, three miles east of Salaita, and arrangements made for the concentration of a large force at and near Mbuyuni. The greatest difficulty in the way of this concentration was the lack of water, the Serengeti plains being by nature a waterless desert. A 2½-inch pipe was laid from Bura, but this did not suffice, over 100,000 gallons being required daily, and the pipe yielding only 40,000. The balance had to be made good by railway and storage tanks. The whole of the watering arrangements were so carefully worked out that not a single hitch occurred when the main concentration eventually took place, in spite of the fact that an enemy raiding party succeeded in damaging the Bura headworks. For this great credit is due to Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Collins, R.E., who was General Tighe's C.R.E.

I cannot speak too highly of all the preliminary work done by General Tighe in the direction of organization and prepara-

tion for offensive measures. This left me free on arrival to devote my whole energies to active operations, and I take this opportunity of placing on record my appreciation of the fact that the success of those operations is in a large measure due to General Tighe's foresight and energy in paving the way for the expected reinforcements.

4. Early in February the 2nd South African Infantry Brigade arrived, and on the 12th of that month General Tighe directed the 2nd Division to make a reconnaissance in force of Salaita, and if possible to occupy that position. General Malleson carried out this operation with three battalions 2nd South African Brigade and three battalions 1st East African Brigade, supported by 18 guns and howitzers. The Salaita position is one of considerable natural strength, and had been carefully entrenched. The enemy was found to be in force, and counter-attacked vigorously. General Malleson was compelled to withdraw to Serengeti; but much useful information had been gained, and the South African Infantry had learned some invaluable lessons in bush fighting, and also had opportunity to estimate the fighting qualities of their enemy.

5. This brings the operations up to the date on which I arrived in East Africa, and decided, as mentioned above, that the occupation of the Kilimanjaro area before the rainy season was a feasible operation.

The original plan devised by General Tighe had been to occupy the Kilimanjaro area by making a converging advance from Longido and Mbuyuni with the 1st and 2nd Divisions respectively, with Kahe as the point towards which movement was to be directed. To this main plan I adhered, but I decided that some alteration of dispositions was necessary in order to avoid frontal attacks against entrenched positions of the enemy in the dense bush, and to secure the rapidity of advance which appeared to me essential to the success of the operation in the short time at our disposal before the commencement of the rains, which might be expected towards the end of March.

Accordingly I issued orders that the 1st South African Mounted Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General Van Deventer, should be transferred from the 1st Division to Mbuyuni and act from there directly under my orders in a turning movement to the north of Taveta and Salaita. This transfer was carried out by rail most expeditiously, and by 4th March all minor concentrations were complete, the 3rd S.A. Brigade had arrived in the country, and my force was disposed as follows :—

- 1st Division (less 1st South African Mounted Brigade),  
Longido.
- 2nd Division (less detachments), Mbuyuni and Serengeti.
- 1st South African Mounted Brigade, Mbuyuni.
- Army Artillery, Mbuyuni and Serengeti.
- The 2nd South African Infantry Brigade, one field and  
one howitzer battery, were retained by me as Force Reserve.

#### PLANS FOR THE ADVANCE.

6. The general outline of my plan has been explained to your Lordship in various telegrams, but I will recapitulate the main points here.

The task of the 1st Division was to cross the 35 miles of waterless bush which lay between Longido and the Engare Nanjuki River, occupy the latter, and then advance between Meru and Kilimanjaro to Boma Jangombe. My intention was thereafter to direct this division on Kahe, and cut the enemy's line of communication by the Usambara Railway.

The task of the 1st South African Mounted Brigade and of the 2nd Division was to advance through the gap between Kilimanjaro and the Pare Hills against the enemy's main force, which was reported to be concentrated in the neighbourhood of Taveta, with strong detachments at the head of Lake Jipe, in the bush east of the river Lumi and at Salaita. The total force with which the enemy could oppose our ad-

vance into the Kilimanjaro area was estimated at 6,000 rifles, with 37 machine guns and 16 guns.

7. The manner in which I proposed to initiate the operation was as follows :—

(a) 1st Division to commence its forward movement on the 5th March, and be allowed two clear days' start before the advance against Taveta should begin.

(b) 1st South African Mounted Brigade and 3rd South African Infantry Brigade, both under command of General Van Deventer, to leave Mbuyuni and Serengeti on the evening of the 7th March, and make a night march to the river Lumi east of Lake Chala. On the 8th to seize the high ground round Lake Chala and develop a turning movement by the west against Taveta. The object of this turning movement was partly to surprise the enemy and partly to avoid a frontal attack through the thick bush which lay between Salaita and Taveta.

(c) 2nd Division to advance against Salaita Hill on the morning of the 8th March, entrench a line facing the hill, and make preparations for an attack, supported by the Army Artillery.

(d) Force Reserve to follow General Van Deventer's column during the night of the 7th-8th March and take up a central position astride the Lumi, whence it could be used to reinforce either Van Deventer or the 2nd Division, as required.

It will be readily seen that these movements demanded the greatest energy and decision on the part of the commanders concerned. In order to be in close touch with the main operations round Taveta, I decided to accompany the Force Reserve to the Lumi, leaving part of my General Staff at Mbuyuni to control operations elsewhere.

The initial movements were carried out successfully and with very slight opposition on the part of the enemy, who was undoubtedly taken by surprise. The 1st Division succeeded in crossing the waterless belt safely, and by the after-

noon of the 6th March had its advanced troops established on the small hill Nagasseni just east of the river Engare Nanjuki. By 2 p.m. on the 7th the whole division was concentrated at this point, and on the 8th moved to Geraragua.

8. On the evening of the 7th March General Van Deventer's column started on its march across the Serengeti plains for Chala, the 1st South African Mounted Brigade from Mbonyuni, and the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade from Serengeti Camp. The Force Reserve, under General Beves, followed in rear of the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade.

At 6 a.m. on the 8th March the 1st South African Mounted Brigade reached the Lumi River near the southern end of the Ziwani swamp, and the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade simultaneously arrived on the river east of Lake Chala. General Van Deventer at once proceeded to make good the high ground lying between Lake Chala and Rombo Mission. He then made a converging movement on the Chala position from the east and north-west, sending the brigade scouts to threaten the enemy's line of retreat to the south. Chala was only lightly held by the enemy, and these dispositions soon caused him to withdraw on Taveta. General Van Deventer occupied Chala and pursued towards Taveta, a portion of which position was occupied by the 2nd South African Horse. As, however, the enemy in Taveta were in considerable strength, General Van Deventer considered it wise to concentrate on the Chala position before dark.

Meanwhile the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade and the Force Reserve halted astride the Lumi to guard the crossing. During the afternoon an enemy force estimated at from 300 to 500, which had been cut off from the main body by our unexpected movement to Chala, advanced from the north along the line of the river in thick bush, and made more than one attack on the outposts of the infantry in bivouacs. These attacks were easily repulsed with loss to the enemy, but also caused most of the losses we sustained that day.

While the bulk of my forces were engaged in making good

the Chala position and the Lumi crossing, the 2nd Division, under Major-General Tighe, carried out, on the 8th March, an artillery bombardment of Salaita; and the infantry of the 1st East African Brigade advanced and dug themselves in, in readiness for an attack on the 9th.

#### TAVETA SEIZED.

9. At dawn on the 9th General Van Deventer sent his mounted troops to get astride the Moschi road west of Taveta, which place the enemy evacuated in the course of the day. He also sent the 12th South African Infantry to make good Ndui Ya Warombo Hill and the Lumi bridge east of Taveta. The 2nd Division continued to bombard Salaita, and at 2 p.m. the infantry advanced to the attack, only to find that the bombardment, coupled with the turning movement via Chala, had compelled the enemy to evacuate, just in time to avoid two squadrons of the 4th South African Horse sent to intercept their retreat.

10. Early on the 10th a regiment of South African Horse dispatched from Chala to make good Taveta were able to seize the position before a large body of the enemy, who had obviously been sent back to reoccupy it. After a brief fight the enemy withdrew towards the Latema-Reata nek, hotly pursued by mounted troops and field artillery. The enemy fought a stubborn rearguard action, and eventually was left in position on the nek.

On the same date the 2nd Division advanced to Taveta, detaching garrisons at Serengeti and Salaita. The Lumi crossing was found impassable for motor lorries and heavy guns, and the bulk of the transport did not cross until the bridge had been improved about mid-day on the 11th.

11. On the morning of the 11th General Van Deventer on the right advanced via Spitze Hill and Kile on Mamba Mission and the line of the Himo. In the centre the 4th South African Horse, supported by the 12th South African Infantry, made good East Kitowo Hill after a brisk skirmish.

On the left the mounted troops of the 2nd Division reconnoitred the Latema-Reata nek, which was found to be held in some strength. The Force Reserve was ordered to move from Chala to Taveta.

It was now clear that the enemy had withdrawn from Taveta in two directions—along the Taveta-Moschi road towards the west, and along the Taveta-Kahe road between Reata and Latema Hills towards the south-west; but the exact line of retirement of his main forces was uncertain. The 4th S. A. Horse were in touch with what appeared to be merely a rearguard on the Moschi road, and an enemy force of unknown strength was in position on the Latema-Reata nek. It was essential to determine whether this was only a covering force, or whether the enemy was in such strength as to threaten a counter-attack towards Taveta. In either case it was necessary to drive him from the nek before I could advance beyond Taveta.

#### LATEMA NEK FIGHT.

The 2nd Division had in Taveta only three weak battalions of the 1st East African Brigade, eight 12 pr. guns and a howitzer battery. With these I determined to clear up the situation, and, if possible, make good the nek.

• 12. This operation was entrusted to Brigadier-General Malleson, commanding the 1st East African Brigade, who had at his disposal

Belfield's Scouts.

Mounted Infantry Company.

Nos. 6 and 8 Field Batteries.

No. 134 Howitzer Battery.

2nd Rhodesian Regiment.

130th Baluchis.

3rd King's African Rifles.

Machine Gun Battery, Loyal North Lancs.

Volunteer Machine Gun Company.

General Malleson selected as his objective the spur of

Latema, which commands the nek from the north, and at 11.45 a.m. advanced to the attack. The 130th Baluchis on the right and 3rd K.A.R. on the left formed the firing line, 2nd Rhodesian Regiment the general reserve. The mounted troops watched both flanks, and the artillery supported the attack at a range of about 3,500 yards.

As they approached the bush-clad slopes of Latema the firing line came under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. The enemy also had at least two guns and several pom-poms in action, and our infantry could make little headway.

13. At 4 p.m. the Force Reserve began to arrive in Taveta, and I reinforced the 2nd Division with the 5th South African Battalion. At the same time General Malleson, who was seriously indisposed, asked to be relieved of his command, and I directed General Tighe to assume command of the operation personally.

#### RHODESIANS' GALLANTRY.

On the arrival of the 5th South African Infantry, General Tighe ordered the Rhodesians to advance, and to carry the King's African Rifles forward with them in an assault on the Latema ridge, the 130th Baluchis co-operating vigorously on the right. All ground gained was to be at once made good. The 9th Field Battery and 5th South African Field Battery, as they arrived in Taveta, were brought into action in support of the attack. This assault was gallantly pressed home, especially by the Rhodesians, but failed to make good the ridge. The 3rd K.A.R., who had been hotly engaged since the outset, had the misfortune to lose their gallant leader, Lieutenant-Colonel B. R. Graham, and several other officers. General Tighe found it necessary to support the Baluchis with half the 5th South African Infantry, and I further reinforced the 2nd Division with the 7th South African Infantry.

14. This latter battalion reached General Tighe about 8 p.m., and shortly afterwards he decided that the best chance of quickly dislodging the enemy from their position on the nek was to send in the two South African Battalions with the

bayonet by night. This operation was no doubt fraught with considerable risk, as there was no opportunity of adequately reconnoitring the ground over which the attack must be made, nor was it by any means certain that the enemy was not present in large numbers. On the other hand, the moon was in the first quarter, and so facilitated movement up to midnight ; the bush along the line of the road to the nek did not appear to be very dense ; and, moreover, the volume of fire developed by the enemy did not seem to indicate that he had a large force actually in his first line, though he had, as usual, a large proportion of machine guns in action.

15. The night advance of the two South African Battalions was ably organized and gallantly led by Lieutenant-Colonel Byron, Commanding 5th South African Infantry. The 7th South African Infantry formed the 1st line, with the 5th in support. They advanced with great dash through the bush, which proved to be much thicker than was anticipated, driving the enemy before them till the latter was on the crest, where he checked our advance. A certain amount of disintegration was inevitable in a night advance through the dense thorn bush in the face of stubborn opposition. Groups of men and individuals who got separated from their leaders had no course but to fall back to the position where the 1st East African Brigade was formed up in general reserve, about 1,500 yards east of the nek.

#### NIGHT FIGHT IN THE BUSH.

Colonel Byron had issued instructions that, on reaching the crest, Lieutenant-Colonel Freeth, commanding the 7th South African Infantry, and Major Thompson, of the same battalion, should wheel outwards and make good the heights north and south of the nek respectively, while Colonel Byron himself secured the actual nek. These two gallant officers most ably carried out their task. Colonel Freeth fought his way up the steep spurs of Latema till he found that the party with him had dwindled to 18 men. He was joined by a few

of the Rhodesians and King's African Rifles, who had clung on to the crest of the ridge after the assault in the evening, and the small party held on till daylight. Major Thompson wheeled towards Reata with 170 men and dug himself in in an advantageous position. About midnight Colonel Byron reached the nek within 30 yards of the enemy's main position. The opposition here was very stubborn. At one point Major Mainprise, R.E., Brigade Major, and 22 men were killed by the concentrated fire of three machine guns; and Colonel Byron, who was himself slightly wounded, reached the nek with only 20 men. The enemy was still in a position which commanded the ground he had won, and finding it impossible either to advance or to hold his ground, he was reluctantly compelled to withdraw.

16. Meanwhile General Tighe found it extremely difficult to keep touch with the progress of the fight, of which he could only judge by the firing and the reports of officers and others sent back from the ridge, who naturally were only cognizant of events in their own immediate vicinity. About 1 a.m. several requests for reinforcements reached him, and he ordered forward the 130th Baluchis. These advanced at 1.20 a.m., and shortly met Colonel Byron, who reported that he had ordered his small party to retire. General Tighe accordingly re-formed his force and dug in astride the road to await daylight. Attempts to gain touch with Colonel Freeth and Major Thompson failed.

Judging by General Tighe's reports, I considered that it was inadvisable to press the direct attack on the Latema-Reata nek further, and preferred to await the effect of the turning movement of the mounted troops, which was ordered for the next morning, and calculated to cause a speedy withdrawal of the enemy from this position. I accordingly, at 4.30 a.m., directed General Tighe to withdraw his whole force before daybreak to a line further back from the nek. This withdrawal was in progress when patrols sent to gain touch with the flank detachments on Reata and Latema found the

latter in occupation of both hills and the enemy in full retreat from the nek. I at once dispatched the 8th South African Infantry to make good the ridge, and some artillery to shell the retiring enemy, who was now estimated to be between 1,500 and 2,000 in number. Effective pursuit through the dense tropical forest which stretched from Kitowo to Kahé was out of the question.

17. Our casualties in the engagement were about 270, which cannot be considered excessive in view of the important results gained. We captured, besides rifles and ammunition, a 6 cm. gun and three machine guns. Some 40 to 50 enemy dead were found on the position, and as they are always most careful to remove their dead and wounded, there can be no doubt that their casualties were severe. While this action was in progress on the Taveta-Kahe road, the 4th South African Horse and 12th South African Infantry kept up a brisk engagement with the enemy on the Taveta-Moschi road, where the enemy was found to be in strong force on the northern slopes of Latema and on North Kitovo Hill. At one point 20 of the enemy dead were found after the engagement.

18. With the end of this action the first phase of the battle for Kilimanjaro came to a conclusion. On the 12th March General Van Deventer continued his advance up to Mamba Mission and the Himo Bridge on the Taveta-Moschi road, in the face of slight opposition. The enemy in his retirement during the night and the early morning had destroyed all bridges on the road, and great difficulty was experienced in rationing Van Deventer's force. On the 13th he advanced and occupied Moschi unopposed, the enemy having withdrawn the previous night towards Kahe. The 2nd and 3rd South African Brigades were thereupon concentrated at the Himo Bridge, the remainder of the 2nd Division at Taveta.

#### GENERAL STEWART'S FLANKING MOVEMENT.

19. It is necessary now to refer to the movements of the 1st Division, which had arrived at Geraragua on the 8th,

having encountered only slight opposition. On the 9th General Stewart halted to reconnoitre and let his supplies catch up. The direct road from Geraragua to Boma-Ja-Ngombe was reported impassable for wheels, all bridges having been destroyed by the enemy. As a result of this and of the exhausted state of his ox transport, General Stewart considered it necessary to halt on the morning of the 10th, and reconnoitre for a road further to the west. A difficult but passable track was found, and the march was resumed at mid-day. The mounted troops left Geraragua at 16 hours on the 10th, on which date they encountered some opposition, sustaining 13 casualties. The Division and the mounted troops eventually joined hands on the Sanja River on the night of the 12th-13th, and on the 13th advanced to Boma-Ja-Ngombe. On the 14th, when the main force of the enemy had already retired to the Ruwu and Kahe positions, the 1st Division joined hands with General Van Deventer in New Moschi, through which place the six companies of the enemy who had been opposing General Stewart had already passed on the night of the 12th March, as previously stated.

20. The next few days, from the 13th to the 18th March, were spent in improving the road from Taveta to Moschi, reorganizing transport, bringing up supplies, etc., and in reconnoitring towards Kahe and the Ruwu River. The whole of the country bordering that river on the north is dense tropical forest, and the enemy took advantage of this to display some boldness in firing into our camps by night.

On the night of the 17th-18th Belfield's Scouts were sent from Himo bridge to occupy Unterer Himo, and at dawn were driven off by a superior force of the enemy. A position on the Ruwu River appeared to me from patrols, intelligence reports, and somewhat incomplete air reconnaissance, to be the next which the enemy might hold, and it was of vital importance for purposes of railway extension and future advance that the enemy should be driven south of this river before the rains commenced.

I therefore, on the 18th, issued orders for a general advance towards the Ruwu. On the extreme right the East African Mounted Rifles and a squadron of the 17th Cavalry advanced from Mue via Masai Kraal. The 3rd South African Brigade moved from Himo bridge on Euphorbien Hill, and the 2nd South African Brigade from the same point on Unterer Himo, to which place the 1st East African Brigade of the 2nd Division sent forward two battalions from Latema. The advance was supported by field and mountain artillery. The infantry occupied the line Euphorbien Hill-Unterer Himo without difficulty, while the East African Mounted Rifles encountered three enemy companies at Masai Kraal. During the day I ordered the 2nd East African Brigade of the 1st Division from New Moschi to Mue, to support the mounted troops on the Kahe road.

#### THE FIGHT FOR KAHE HILL.

21. On the 19th the general advance continued, but the 1st East African, 2nd<sup>d</sup> and 3rd South African Brigades could make little progress through the well-nigh impenetrable bush which surrounded the enemy's position on the Himo about Rasthaus. The 3rd Brigade, ably supported by the 28th Mountain Battery, had a sharp engagement with the enemy at dusk while occupying its line for the night, and sustained 30-40 casualties. The fresh graves of twenty-seven of the enemy's askaris were afterwards found in the vicinity of the action. The 2nd East African Brigade and the mounted troops of the 1st Division under General Sheppard pushed the enemy back to Store, four miles south of Masai Kraal, and bivouacked there for the night. On the 20th I withdrew the 2nd South African Brigade from Unterer Himo, and sent three battalions to reinforce General Sheppard on the Mue-Kahe Road, where I anticipated the strongest opposition. At 2 p.m. on the 20th General Van Deventer, with the 1st South African Mounted Brigade, the 4th South African Horse, and two field batteries, left Moschi with instructions to

cross the Pangani, and get in rear of the enemy's position at Kahe Station. That night General Sheppard's camp at Store was heavily attacked from 9.30 p.m. to midnight. These attacks were repulsed with loss to the enemy. The enemy force actually engaged was estimated by prisoners at 500 men, with another 500 in reserve. Their casualties were estimated at 70-100, ours were 20.

22. At daylight on the 21st Van Deventer was approaching the Pangani from the west at a point south-west of Kahe Hill. He experienced some difficulty in crossing the river, but by mid-day had occupied in succession Kahe Hill, Bau-man Hill, and Kahe Station with slight opposition. The enemy had already earlier in the day blown up the main railway bridge over the Ruwu (or Pangani).

After the loss of Kahe Hill the enemy realized its importance as the key to the Ruwu position, and made several determined attempts to recover it, which were, however, beaten back with loss. A mounted party which moved forward from Kahe Hill to cut off the retreat of the enemy by the wagon road south of the Ruwu found the enemy in force, and had to retire. Van Deventer therefore waited for the following day to develop the turning movement after his whole brigade should have been brought across the Pangani. During the whole day the enemy had two 4.1-inch naval guns in action, one on a railway truck and the other from a concealed fixed position south of the Ruwu.

23. On the 21st General Sheppard had the following troops under his command :—

*2nd East African Brigade.*

25th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.

29th Punjabis.

129th Baluchis.

*2nd South African Brigade.*

5th South African Battalion.

6th South African Battalion.

8th South African Battalion.

*Divisional Troops.*

East African Mounted Rifles.

1 Squadron 17th Cavalry.

1st and 3rd South African Field Artillery Batteries.

27th Mountain Battery.

No. 12 Howitzer Battery.

1st King's African Rifles.

2 Royal Naval Armoured Cars.

As soon as I heard that General Van Deventer was nearing Kahe I ordered General Sheppard to advance. This he did at 11.30 a.m., with the 2nd South African Brigade on his right and the 2nd East African Brigade on his left, the dividing line being the Masai Kraal-Kahe road. By 12.30 p.m. the enemy had been driven back on to his main position on the south edge of a clearing in the dense bush, with his east and west flanks protected respectively by the Soko Nassai and the Defu Rivers, both of which were considerable obstacles to the movements of infantry. General Sheppard's intention was to attack the enemy frontally, and, with or without the aid of the 3rd South African Brigade, to envelop his right (eastern) flank.

“THE MEN FOUGHT LIKE HEROES.”

Unfortunately the advance of the 3rd Brigade from Eu-phorbien Hill was so impeded by the dense bush that it was unable to exercise any influence on the fight, and without its aid the task proved to be beyond the powers of the force at General Sheppard's disposal. His infantry tried to cross the clearing, which varied in width from 600 to 1,200 yards; but the enemy's dispositions were so skilfully made that these attempts were met and repulsed by rifle and machine-gun fire, both from front and flank. Two double companies of the 120th Baluchis crossed the Soko Nassai, and endeavoured to turn the enemy's right; but here, too, they were held up. Our guns were well handled, the 27th Mountain Battery being

in action in the actual firing line; but definite targets were difficult to obtain owing to the density of the bush. The whole force, in fact, was ably handled by General Sheppard; and the men fought like heroes, but they were unable to turn the enemy from his strong position.

\* General Sheppard did not know that Van Deventer was already at Kahe Station, some miles in advance of his right flank, and no contact could be established through the intervening thick bush. He accordingly gave orders to dig in on the ground won, with a view to renewing the attack on the 22nd. At dawn on the 22nd patrols found the enemy gone. He had waited only for the cover of night to retire across the Ruwu River, and proceed down the main road towards Lembeni, abandoning his stationary 4.1-inch gun, which had been blown up.

Our casualties at the Soko Nassai action were 288. It is not easy to estimate those of the enemy, but a large pile of used field-dressings found south of the Ruwu told a significant tale. As far as can be ascertained, the enemy forces employed on the 22nd were 14 or 15 companies, distributed along the Himo and Ruwu from Rasthaus to Kahe.

Besides the two 4.1-inch naval guns, the enemy employed several field guns and pom-poms.

24. The result of these operations from the 18th to 21st March was to drive the enemy out of the country north of and along the Ruwu River. Aruscha had meanwhile been occupied by our mounted scouts, who drove off an enemy company in a southerly direction, and thus the conquest of the Kilimanjaro Meru Area, probably the richest and most desirable district of German East Africa, was satisfactorily completed. I accordingly established my Headquarters at Moschi, placed a chain of outposts along the line of the Ruwu, and set to work to reorganize my force for the next move, meanwhile concentrating the troops as far as possible in healthy localities, to give the men a rest after the hardships they had endured.

## SERVICES OF OFFICERS.

25. I am particularly indebted to the following officers for their services during the operations :—

Major-General M. J. Tighe, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., commanding the 2nd Division, loyally co-operated by carrying out my wishes in the spirit and the letter. He also commanded at the successful action at Latema nek. I have already mentioned his great services in paving the way for the offensive campaign.

Brigadier-General J. L. Van Deventer, commanding 1st South African Mounted Brigade, commanded throughout the operations an independent column, and executed the turning movements to which the rapidity of our success was undoubtedly due. He displayed soldierly qualities of a high order in controlling the mounted troops in their long night marches and manœuvres through unknown and extremely difficult country.

The Air Services performed valuable reconnaissance work throughout the operations, and on several occasions considerably demoralized the enemy by the use of bombs.

The Royal Artillery were ably handled by Brigadier-General J. H. V. Crowe, and on all occasions when they had an opportunity of preparing the way for and covering the infantry advance their support was most effective.

The Supply and Transport Services worked with great zeal, and the fact that no hitch occurred in the supply of units scattered over such a large area is evidence of the efficiency displayed by all executive ranks. Such roads as do exist are merely clearings through the bush and swamp, and these rapidly become well-nigh impassable for heavy lorries. The existing track had constantly to be improved, and deviations cut, causing endless delays, and the result was that transport drivers were frequently at work continuously night and day.

The rapidity of the advance, and the distance to which it was carried, must almost inevitably have caused a breakdown in the transport had it not been for the unremitting exertions

of the railway engineers who carried forward the railway from the Njoro drift, east of Salaita, to Taveta and the Latema nek at an average rate of a mile a day, including surveying, heavy bush cutting, and the bridging of the Lumi River. This fine performance is largely due to the ripe experience and organizing power of Colonel Sir W. Johns, Kt., C.I.E.

Exceptionally heavy work, too, has been thrown upon medical officers and *personnel*. All wounded have been treated and evacuated expeditiously, and the number of sick who passed daily through the hands of the medical authorities, more especially since the cessation of active operations, has been very great. Great credit is due to Surgeon-General G. D. Hunter, C.M.G., D.S.O., and his assistants.

The excellent manner in which communication has been maintained throughout reflects great credit on my Signal Service, the officers and men of which, under the able control of Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Hawtrey, R.E., have spared no efforts in overcoming the many difficulties attendant on operating in such country and on such a large front.

The Officers of my Staff have throughout rendered me every possible assistance. I would especially mention Colonel (now Brigadier-General) J. J. Collyer, my chief of the General Staff, whose sound judgment, ability, and tact made possible the harmonious working of a curiously heterogeneous force; and Brigadier-General R. H. Ewart, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., A.D.C., Administrative Staff, who has done everything possible to perfect and co-ordinate the working of the various administrative services on which an army operating in equatorial Africa is peculiarly dependent.

Brigadier-General W. F. S. Edwards, D.S.O., my Inspector-General of Communications, rendered invaluable services, and the rapidity and smoothness with which the concentration of troops was carried out were very largely due to his energy and powers of organization, while the manner in which he extended the lines of communication during the actual operations left nothing to be desired.

## APPENDIX VI.

It is not easy for me to express my appreciation of the conduct of the troops during these operations. General and Staff Officers, Commanding, Regimental, and Departmental Officers, rank and file, and followers, British, South African, Indian, and African, all have worked with a zeal and single-minded devotion to duty that is beyond praise. Shortage of transport necessitated the force moving on light scale, and the majority of the troops had no more than a waterproof sheet and a blanket for three weeks on end. Rations at times unavoidably ran short. Long marches in the hot sun and occasional drenching rains were calculated to try the most hardened campaigner. Yet all these hardships were endured with unfailing cheerfulness, and a chance of dealing a blow at the enemy seemed to be the only recompense required.

A list of those officers and N.C.O.'s and men whom I desire to bring to your Lordship's special notice in connection with these operations will be forwarded at an early date.

I have the honour to be,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

J. C. SMUTS, Lieutenant-General,  
Commander-in-Chief, East African Force.

## APPENDIX VII.

---

### THE ADVANCE TO THE RUFIDI.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SMUTS'S SECOND DISPATCH.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
EAST AFRICA, 27th October 1916.

SIR,

In my last Dispatch I described the brief but important operations which ended on 21st March in the occupation of the Kilimanjaro-Aruscha area.

The strategy involved in those operations was determined for me by the military situation I found existing on my arrival in British East Africa in February. The opposing armies had massed on the Taveta and Longido fronts; the rainy season was expected in a few weeks, and there was no time or necessity for radical alteration in the plans on which my predecessor had been working. When the operations came to an end it was necessary without delay to dispose my forces most advantageously with a view to their health and comfort during the approaching rainy season, and it became necessary to study the important question of the strategy to be followed in the future operations.

#### REORGANIZATION OF FORCES.

(2) Preliminary to both matters, however, was the question of reorganization of the East African forces, which I

deemed necessary not only for the vigorous prosecution of the coming campaign, but also to secure the smooth and harmonious working of a most heterogeneous army, drawn from almost all continents and speaking a babel of languages. I decided to abolish the two Divisions formed by my predecessor and to organize my forces into three Divisions, two of which were to consist of the contingents from the Union of South Africa, and the third was to include the Indian and other British forces. The Union Divisions were again so organized that each should eventually contain a mounted and an infantry brigade, so as to secure the necessary mobility to enable us to cope more expeditiously with the enemy *askari* army of fleet-footed Africans. In these alterations, as well as in all other important matters which I have had from time to time to submit for the sanction of the War Office, I have found the uniform and prompt support of the latter, for which I cannot be sufficiently grateful, and to which the success achieved in this campaign was in no small measure due. At the end of March, then, the East African Force—apart from lines of communication troops, under Brigadier-General W. F. S. Edwards, D.S.O., as I.G.C.—was organized as follows :—

*The First Division*, under Major-General A. R. Hoskins, C.M.G., D.S.O., comprised the First East African Brigade, under Brigadier-General S. H. Sheppard, D.S.O., and the Second East African Brigade, under Brigadier-General J. A. Hannington, C.M.G., D.S.O.

*The Second Division*, under Major-General J. L. Van Deventer, comprised the First South African Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier-General Manie Botha, and the Third South African Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General C. A. L. Berrange, C.M.G.

*The Third Division*, under Major-General Coen Brits, comprised the Second South African Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier-General B. Enslin, and the Second South African Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General P. S. Beves.

The Second South African Mounted Brigade arrived in May, and was ready to take the field in the latter half of June.

Having completed the above reorganization, I disposed the infantry units as far as possible at suitable points on high and dry ground at Moschi, Himo, and Mbuyuni, with only advance guards along the deadly malarial line of the Ruwu, facing the enemy forces in the Pare mountains.

The First Mounted Brigade was pushed on to the Aruscha area, which was reported to be most suitable for horses, and at the end of March the whole brigade had arrived there.

#### GENERAL PLAN OF INVASION.

(3) The most important problem for consideration was the strategy to be followed in the coming campaign. As a result of the preceding operations we had just barely entered the enemy territory, which stretched out before us in enormous extent, with no known vital point anywhere, containing no important cities or centres, with practically no roads, the only dominant economical features of the whole being the two railway systems. Faulty strategy at the beginning, a wrong line of invasion once entered upon, might lead to months of futile marching and wasted effort. All our information credited the enemy with the twofold intention of conducting an obstinate and prolonged campaign in the Pare and Usambara mountains, and thereafter retiring to fight out the last phases of the campaign in the Tabora area, from which much of his supplies and most of his recruits were drawn. Careful consideration was given to the various alternative lines of invasion that presented themselves.

(4) There was, in the first place, the possibility of advancing inland from the coast along the existing railway lines, which had been adopted with such signal success in the German South-West Africa campaign. An advance from Tanga was, however, ruled out because I considered the place of no importance after the Tanga railway had been reached further north. Much, on the other hand, was to be said for an advance

inland from Dar-es-Salaam, the capture of which would have great political and military importance, and would much facilitate the transport and supply arrangements for the campaign into the interior. It was, however, also ruled out, partly because the prevalence of the south-east monsoon at that period makes a landing of a large force on that coast an operation of great difficulty and even danger, partly because a prolonged campaign on the coast immediately after the rainy season would mean the disappearance of a very large percentage of my army from malaria and other tropical ailments.

(5) In the second place, consideration was given to the question of an advance on Tabora by Victoria Nyanza, which we controlled, and Muanza, which would have to be wrested from the enemy. This plan had the advantage of presenting a comparatively short line of advance, and of promising to strike at the main recruiting ground of the enemy forces, as the German *askaris* would be loath to remain in the field after their homes and families had fallen into our hands. Its adoption, however, would involve the transfer to a distant theatre of a large part of our forces, while the enemy army would remain concentrated and ready to strike at our railway communications with the coast. But my main objection to adopting it was the consideration that to occupy so huge a territory as German East Africa within reasonable time a simultaneous advance from different points along different routes was essential. Now in the Eastern Lake and Uganda area we already had a force of about 2,000 rifles; in addition the Belgians had a very large force in the West, in the neighbourhood of Lake Kivu, with which they were prepared to invade the Ruanda and Urundi districts if we could assist them with the necessary transport and supply arrangements, via Victoria Nyanza. For the occupation of the Western parts of German East Africa it was therefore only necessary to make these arrangements, and thereby to set the Belgian and British forces simultaneously in sympathetic motion in

the Ruanda and Bukoba districts respectively. This was done, and with the best results, as will be described later.

(6) There remained, then, the third and last alternative of either striking at the main enemy forces in the Pare and Usambara mountains along the Tanga railway line, or of launching an attack against the interior and the Central Railway from Aruscha. A movement against the enemy concentration along the Tanga railway had, however, several grave disadvantages. It was the step desired and expected by the enemy, as the massing of almost his entire fighting force in that area showed. It would involve a prolonged and costly campaign over terrain which nature and art had prepared admirably for defensive purposes. And at the end of such a campaign the entire enemy territory would still remain unoccupied, as the operations would have been conducted lengthwise all along the border. On the other hand, an advance from Aruscha into the interior, if it was not to be a mere temporary raid but a secure and permanent occupation of the country, had to be in such force that it could meet any counter-attack by the enemy, who would in such counter-attack have the advantage of his two railway systems, and so be practically moving on interior lines. Such an advance in force, therefore, ran the risk of weakening our forces in front of the enemy in the Pare and Usambara mountains, and of giving him an opening to attack our vulnerable communications both with the interior and the coast.

(7) In spite of these difficulties powerful arguments weighed with me in finally deciding in favour of an advance into the interior. I was informed that the violence of the coming rainy season would be mostly confined to the Kilimanjaro-Aruscha area ; that farther West and South the rainy season was milder, and would not markedly interfere with military operations ; and therefore an advance into the interior would prevent our operations being brought to a complete standstill during the rainy months of April and May. In addition to this the enemy had made the mistake of retiring south along

the Tanga railway with practically his entire fighting force, and the door to the interior stood wide open and unguarded. Even the six companies which had operated between Kilimanjaro and Meru mountains against General Stewart's advance from Longido, and were expected by me to fall back on Aruscha and obstruct our advance in that direction, joined the enemy's main force at Kahe. A small detachment at Aruscha fell back before the advance of our mounted scouts, and when the mounted brigade arrived at Aruscha at the end of March, there was for the moment nothing to prevent an immediate movement into the heart of the enemy country. I decided to push the whole of the 2nd Division into the interior under Van Deventer, and for the present to keep the other two divisions with me in rain quarters, facing the enemy concentration south of the Ruwu. In this way it would be possible to occupy a valuable portion of the enemy country within the next two months ; and if, as I expected, this move would and must have the effect of compelling the enemy to withdraw large forces from the Pares and Usambaras to stem the tide of invasion into the interior, I could, if necessary, strengthen Van Deventer still further and yet have sufficient troops left to make a comparatively easy conquest of these mountains against the enemy's weakened defence. These anticipations were fully realized, as will be seen from the sequel.

#### VAN DEVENTER'S MARCH TO KONDOA IRANGI.

(8) By 1st April the Headquarters of the 2nd Division, together with the 1st South African Mounted Brigade and two batteries of artillery, had reached Aruscha, while two battalions of the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade were on the way.

On the same day General Van Deventer reported that his scouts had engaged the enemy six miles north of Lolkissale, an isolated rocky hill in the Masai Steppe some 35 miles southwest of Aruscha. Further reports showed that this force

consisted of a detachment of the enemy which had taken up a position covering the water springs on the hill, and that no other water was to be found in the vicinity. I therefore issued instructions that the movement southward should be initiated by the occupation of Lolkissale.

\* This operation was carried out with great skill by the 1st Mounted Brigade. On the morning of the 3rd April three regiments of South African Horse moved out from Aruscha, and during the night of 3rd-4th April surrounded Lolkissale. The enemy held the mountain with considerable determination, and fighting continued all day on the 4th and 5th; but at daybreak on the 6th the whole force, consisting of the 28th Field Company and Kaempfe's Detachment numbering 17 whites and 404 *askaris* with porters and two machine guns, surrendered. Our horses had been without water since noon of the 3rd. A large quantity of stores, ammunition, pack animals, etc., fell into our hands, while from information obtained from prisoners and captured documents it was ascertained that the enemy contemplated reinforcing Ufioime and Kondoa Irangi, and that the garrisons at these places had received instructions to hold out as long as possible. As it was evident that the bulk of these reinforcements must be sent from the troops on the Usambara Railway, and that several weeks must elapse before they could arrive, I decided to press forward the movement southwards of the 2nd Division as rapidly as possible, and ordered General Van Deventer to send his mounted troops to occupy Ufioime, Umbulu, and Kondoa Irangi before the enemy could reinforce them—the remainder of the 2nd Division to follow in support of the mounted troops.

(9) The 1st Mounted Brigade continued its advance to Ufioime on the 7th, encountering the enemy's patrols at various points of the route, and dispersing them with loss in killed and prisoners. On the 10th the enemy were located holding a kopje in the vicinity of Ufioime, and on the 11th the Brigade advanced from the Tarangire River. This movement resulted

## APPENDIX VII.

in the occupation of Ufiome on the 13th, the garrison of about 20 whites and 200 *askaris* retiring into the mountains, leaving 30 prisoners, some wounded, and a large quantity of supplies in our hands. The enemy was pursued for 20 miles south to Kisesse and Ssalanga, retiring in disorder.

(10) As the horses of the 1st Mounted Brigade were greatly exhausted by the continuous marching and fighting, a halt was made at Ssalanga until the 17th. The 4th South African Horse had in the meantime been sent by me to join the 2nd Division, and on its arrival was directed on Umbulu with instructions to clear Umbulu of the enemy.

The 10th South African Infantry and 28th Mountain Battery were also detailed by General Van Deventer to follow in support of the 4th South African Horse. Umbulu was finally occupied on 11th May, about one company of the enemy being driven out with loss.

The advance southward continued on the 17th, and contact was made with the enemy four miles north of Kondo Irangi on the same day. Fighting continued till noon of the 19th, when our troops occupied Kondo Irangi with no casualties, having inflicted a loss on the enemy of 20 killed, and 4 whites and 30 *askaris* captured. The enemy succeeded in destroying the wireless station and a portion of his supplies, but left behind about 80 rifles with much ammunition, and 800 head of cattle.

(11) General Van Deventer reported after this action that his horses were so exhausted that he would not be able to move until remounts arrived. He had lost hundreds of animals from horse sickness during his advance of some 200 miles from Moschi in the last four weeks, and his troops were worn out with ceaseless marching and fighting. I therefore decided that the 2nd Division should concentrate at Kondo Irangi with detachments at Ufiome and Umbulu, and send patrols towards the Central Railway, Ssingida, Mkalama, and Handeni. During the remainder of the month and the first few days of May this concentration was gradually effected. The expedi-

tion, conducted by Van Deventer with his usual dash and resourcefulness, had secured important results at a trifling cost. Within a month of the battle of Kahe we had taken possession of the high, healthy, and fertile plateau which connects Aruscha with the Central Railway, and had occupied the dominant strategic points for any further advance, whether that was to be in the direction of the Central Railway, or westward to Tabora, or even eastward towards Handeni and the Eastern Usambara.

(12) Meanwhile, by the middle of April, the rainy season had set in with the greatest violence in the whole area from Taveta to Kondoia Irangi. The numerous rivers came down in flood, and swept away almost all our laboriously built bridges, the roads became impassable mud tracks, and all transport became a physical impossibility. The rains fell steadily day after day, sometimes as much as four inches in one day, and the low-lying parts of the country assumed the appearance of lakes. Fortunately, the railway had by this time reached Taveta, where sufficient supplies could be dumped for our resting troops. The extension of the line was energetically continued to join the Kahe-Moschi railway, although for long distances the track was practically under water, and the attention of thousands of labourers was constantly required to prevent its disappearance in the mud. Van Deventer's Division in the interior was cut off, and managed to live for weeks on such supplies as could be collected locally, or could be carried by porters from Lolikissale for a distance of 120 miles. The strain and privation were, however, bound to be reflected in the general state of health of the troops.

(13) Meanwhile, also, the enemy had realized the tremendous threat which this expedition constituted against his whole scheme of defence, and, thanks to the onset of the rainy season bringing General Van Deventer's movement to a standstill, he was able to take measures to avert the danger to his rear by hurriedly transferring a great part of his force

from the Usambara to the Central Railway, moving by rail to Mombo, thence by road to Morogoro or Kilossa, and again by rail to Dodoma. This movement placed him in a position to concentrate some 4,000 men against the 2nd Division, which was at the time so weakened by sickness and unavoidable detachments that it could barely dispose of 3,000 rifles in its isolated position at Kondoa Irangi. The enemy, perceiving this, felt encouraged to assume the offensive, and advanced from the Central Railway in the early days of May, arriving on the 7th within six miles of Kondoa Irangi.

General Van Deventer gradually withdrew his advanced posts in face of this movement, keeping touch with the enemy, and finally disposed his force in defensive positions on a perimeter of about five miles frontage round Kondoa.

(14) On the 9th the enemy drove in our outlying piquets south-east of the village, and at 7.30 p.m. began an attack which lasted for nearly eight hours. This attack was pressed with determination, the enemy making four separate onslaughts, the brunt of which fell on the 11th South African Infantry, supported by the 12th South African Infantry. In some places the enemy repeatedly charged right up to our positions. Firing finally ceased at 3.15 a.m. on the 10th, when the enemy withdrew, leaving three whites and fifty-eight *askaris* dead on the ground, and five wounded as prisoners. There were numerous signs on the ground of further casualties. Our own losses were two officers and four other ranks killed, one officer and seventeen other ranks wounded. From information obtained as a result of the fighting it was found that the enemy had about twenty-five companies engaged, under the personal command of Colonel von Lettow, the German Commander-in-Chief. His force was organized as three battalions and one smaller detachment. One battalion commander, von Kornatzky, was killed, and another, von Bock, wounded.

(15) With this defeat, the enemy's last hope of successful resistance to any large portion of our forces was extinguished.

He continued in position round Kondoa during the remainder of May and the greater part of June, keeping for the most part to the thick bush, and engaging in desultory fighting and occasional long-range bombardment. General Van Deventer was unable to assume the offensive on any large scale on account of his weakness in horseflesh, the heavy sick rate amongst his men, and the great difficulties of supply over a line of communication of two hundred miles of quagmire ; and had therefore to content himself with minor operations and enterprises while reorganizing his forces and calling in his detachments from elsewhere. The 10th South African Infantry Regiment and 28th Mountain Battery arrived from Umbulu on 22nd May. I had already decided to strengthen the 2nd Division with two more battalions, the 7th and 8th South African Infantry Regiments, and additional artillery and machine guns, all from the 3rd Division, and these reinforcements eventually reached the Division on 23rd May and following days.

#### OCCUPATION OF THE PARE, USAMBARA, AND HANDENI AREAS.

(16) Such was the position when, towards the end of the second week in May, the rains abated, the ground once more began to harden, and it became evident that a general movement would soon again be possible. The direction of that movement was settled for me by the necessity of clearing the enemy from the Pare and Usambara mountains before the further invasion of German East Africa could safely proceed.

The general conception was to move eastward along these mountains and at a point opposite Handeni to swing South and march towards the Central Railway in a movement parallel to that of Van Deventer. The concentration of the enemy forces in front of Kondoa now made the occupation of the Pares and Usambaras comparatively easy, but the advance had to be rapidly executed to forestall any return movement of the enemy from Kondoa to the Handeni or Usambara area. Moving through the Masai Steppe along the old caravan

route from Kondoa to Handeni, the enemy could reach the latter place in twelve days, and in two or three days more could be on the Tanga Railway at Korogwe. It was therefore advisable for my advance to reach the Western Usambara in a fortnight ; further, if it could reach Handeni before the arrival of strong enemy reinforcements, I would have a second force almost the same distance from the Central Railway as that at Kondoa, and it would be impossible for the enemy to make effective resistance to the simultaneous advance of both columns situated 170 miles apart. The nature of the country was, however, such as almost to preclude all rapidity of movement. The Pares and Usambaras are huge blocks of mountains with fertile valleys ; the southern slopes are precipitous, and immediately below runs the Tanga railway, while further south dense bush extends for 17 to 20 miles to the Pangani, an impassable river flowing almost parallel to the railway and the mountains. The enemy held the mountains and the railway, and had outposts along the Pangani River. Our advance was expected to follow the railway, which had been fortified at all convenient points for a hundred miles ; and the enemy had therefore every reason to expect that the force opposing us, consisting of from 1,200 to 2,000 troops with field and naval guns, would render our progress sufficiently slow to enable him to send any necessary reinforcements. I therefore decided on the following dispositions for my advance. The main column, with most of the artillery and transport, was to proceed down the inner or left bank of the Pangani, somewhat in advance of another smaller column following the railway line, while a third small column was to start from Mbuyuni and enter the North Pares from the north side through the Ngulu Gap, joining the centre column at Same Pass between the middle and South Pares. In this way, with my flanks well forward in the mountains and along the Pangani, any real resistance of the enemy in his well-prepared positions in the centre along the railway would become hopeless. The advance commenced on 18th

May by the movement of Lieutenant-Colonel T. O. Fitzgerald's battalion of the 3rd King's African Rifles from Mbuyuni to the Ngulu Gap, and on the 22nd May Brigadier-General Hannington's brigade moved from Ruwu along the railway, while Generals Sheppard's and Beves' brigades moved down the Pangani River accompanied by Major-General Hoskins and myself.

(17) The enemy's first position was reported to be at Lembeni, at which place the railway takes a sharp bend in towards the mountains and the ground is most suitable for defensive action.

I trusted, however, to turn this position either directly by Fitzgerald's column forcing its way through the Ngulu Gap, or indirectly by the continued advance of the Pangani column past the enemy's position.

The turning movements proved successful, and the enemy evacuated the Lembeni position on 24th May; on the following day Hannington occupied Same station without opposition, and on the 26th May Fitzgerald's column joined Hannington's and thereafter formed part of it. Hannington was ordered to proceed on the 28th over Same Pass along the road which passes through the South Pare mountain, and thence through the Gonja Gap between this mountain and the Usambara on to Mkomazi River. This move would prevent the enemy from making a stand on the railway along the South Pare mountain, and would at the same time clear the enemy out of the Gonja Gap. It was completely successful; on the 29th Hannington reached Gonja, and two days after the Mkomazi road bridge.

(18) Meanwhile the advance of the main column continued steadily along the Pangani, the advanced guards and mounted troops continuing to keep touch with the enemy's rearguards, and I soon discovered that it was his intention to make his next stand near Mikotscheni, at which place the Pangani River rejoins the railway close to the mountains.

On the 29th May the advanced troops came up against

this position and drew fire from a naval 4.1-inch gun and two field guns. On the 30th May the 2nd Rhodesian Regiment attacked the position in front, while the rest of General Sheppard's brigade made an arduous but successful turning movement by our left. The enemy retired in the night along the railway, leaving part of a new bridge in process of construction behind him. Buiko station was occupied by us the following day.

(19) Leaving a rearguard of two companies in front of Hannington at Mkomazi, the enemy's main body retired along the railway to Mombo station, whence a trolley line proceeds to Handeni. They then followed this trolley line and entrenched themselves at Mkalamo where this line crosses the Pangani River. This retirement made it clear that the enemy was not going to make a stand in the Usambara, but intended to retire to Handeni and on to the Central Railway. I decided, therefore, to cross to the right bank of the Pangani with the main column, and to leave the further clearing of the Usambara district to Hannington. The rapidity of our advance had exceeded my best expectations. We had reached the Usambara in ten days, covering a distance of about 130 miles over trackless country along the Pangani River and through the mountains.

(20) As at this point a short pause in the operations was necessary to enable the German bridge over the Pangani to be completed, and to give the railway time to catch up with the advance, I proceeded on 2nd June via Moschi to Kondea Irangi, to visit the 2nd Division and to arrange personally the plans for future co-operation between my two widely separated forces.

On my return on 7th June I found that the German bridge over the Pangani had been completed and another smaller one made close to Buiko railway station, roads had been cut through the bush, and another 30 miles south had been covered by the main column along the right bank of the Pangani.

(31) I had instructed General Hannynhton with his brigade to proceed down the railway line with Mombo as his objective. He advanced to Mazinde station on 8th June and occupied Mombo on 9th June, meeting with only slight opposition and capturing a machine gun from the enemy. The enemy retired south along the railway. On the same date the main force of the enemy was encountered by our main column entrenched at Mkalamo, and the 1st East African Brigade had a sharp action, lasting till nightfall. The enemy retired in the night, leaving numerous dead on the ground.

At Mkalamo the trolley line from Mombo to Handeni was reached on the 10th, and thereafter the advance to Handeni continued for a considerable distance along its route. The trolley line leaves the Pangani at Luchomo, and from that point proceeds in a southerly direction to Nderema, 2 miles west of Handeni. Between Luchomo and Nderema is a dry belt of 32 miles, the only water being found by digging in a dry river bed at Mbagui, 22 miles south of Luchomo. To cross this distance General Sheppard was sent forward with two battalions to press the enemy back until Mbagui was reached on the 13th. From there he worked forward to within five miles of Handeni, where the enemy was on 15th June found to hold a strongly entrenched position. It was therefore decided to send Beves' brigade from Mbagui by a more westerly route through Gitu to Ssangeni on the Mssangassi River, 10 miles west of Handeni, where good water was found on the 17th June, and on the following day the brigade was launched against the enemy's southward line of retreat from Handeni at Pongwe and another point 4 miles north of Pongwe. At both places the enemy's retreating forces were beaten with heavy loss and driven into the bush, a pom-pom gun being subsequently found abandoned in the bush by the enemy. On the following day Handeni and Nderema were occupied by Sheppard. On the same day Colonel J. J. Byron's battalion (5th South African Infantry) was sent in

pursuit of the enemy to occupy Kangata, 8 miles south of Fongwe. They found the enemy in a concealed entrenched position in dense bush, and in the fight which ensued lost heavily, but held on staunchly until night, when the enemy retreated. At Kangata the main column for the first time since leaving Kahe came into a made road (the main road between Handeni and Morogoro), having marched for about 200 miles along routes prepared by themselves, mostly by cutting through the bush.

(22) During these operations General Hannington had occupied Wilhelmstal unopposed on the 12th June, and advanced along the Tanga railway as far as Korogwe on the 15th, where the wagon bridge had fortunately been saved by his special exertions.

From this point he was instructed to move along the Korogwe-Handeni road and to rejoin with all speed the 1st Division, which was now nearing Handeni. He reached Handeni on 20th June, the day after its occupation by Sheppard.

(23) The advance of the main column in pursuit of the enemy continued, and he was next reported as holding a strong position on the Lukigura River. I therefore divided my force in the hope of getting round his position with a flying column and compelling him to stand or fight.

General Hoskins with two South African Infantry battalions, a composite battalion of Kashmir Imperial Service Infantry, 25th Royal Fusiliers, and a small body of mounted Scouts, marched on the night of 23rd June to a point on the Lukigura River, north of the bridge held by the enemy. This force crossed the river the next morning, and then got astride the road behind the enemy's position. The remainder of the 1st Division under command of General Sheppard advanced direct on the enemy's position.

At midday on 24th June both columns engaged the enemy on three sides, and after some resistance defeated him, with a loss of 7 whites killed and wounded, 14 white prisoners. 30

askaris killed and many wounded and captured, together with the capture of two machine guns and parts of a third, one pom-pom and much ammunition. The Fusiliers and Kashmiris specially distinguished themselves in this action, in which only the dense bush enabled the enemy force to escape from complete capture.

(24) We had now reached the eastern slopes of the Ngoro block of mountains, and immediately in our front was the high Kanga mountain. There was every indication that the enemy was massing in great force in both mountains in front of us, as well as on our right flank, and that any further movement would have to slow down. Our transport had reached the utmost radius of its capacity, and the troops had been on half rations for some time. They also required rest and reorganization. Several units were reduced to 30 per cent. of their original effectives, owing to the ravages of malaria, and the difficulties of evacuating the sick were as great as those of forwarding supplies and reinforcements.

Since 22nd May the troops had marched considerably over 200 miles in difficult country, often having to cut their way through almost impenetrable bush, and constantly engaging the enemy in his prepared rearguard positions. The march was rendered more arduous by most serious transport and supply difficulties, and, for the last 80 miles since leaving the Pangani, frequent shortage of water for both men and animals. Besides, I deemed it necessary, in view of the ever growing supply difficulties, to repair and restore the Mombasa-Nderema trolley line before moving further.

Further, it was necessary for the execution of my plans that the 2nd Division should be more advanced before the combined movement against the enemy's main forces on the Central Railway should begin.

I therefore formed a large standing camp on the Msingi River, some 8 miles beyond the Lukigura, in which to rest and refit the troops prior to the next phase of operations.

## OCCUPATION OF COASTAL AREA TO BAGAMOYO.

(25) The pause on the Msiha River enabled me also to deal with another matter which was rapidly becoming urgent. I had deliberately left the East Usambara area alone while pushing the enemy forces in front of me back as fast and as far as possible. The situation on my left flank towards the sea would either clear itself up by the retirement of the small enemy forces in that area, or, if necessary, they could be dealt with at a more convenient time. The railway line beyond Korogwe and the lower reaches of the Pangani River were, therefore, for the present left unoccupied. Steps were, however, taken to seize Tanga. On 16th June the 5th Indian Infantry, moving south towards the border, occupied Mwakijembe, which the enemy had held strongly for a long time as a base from which to raid and bomb the Mombasa railway. The enemy force of about one company retreated towards the coast north of Tanga. Arrangements were then made by the Inspector-General of Communications for the landing of a force under Colonel C. U. Price, C.M.G., at Kwale Bay, 8 miles north of Tanga, and a simultaneous attack on that port by land and sea. This force, after slight opposition, arrived before Tanga on the 7th July simultaneously with the Navy, and occupied it practically without opposition. The enemy, consisting of two companies, was expected to retire towards Pangani, but did not do so, and continued to hang about in the vicinity, and on several occasions even indulged in some sniping into the town. At the same time the small force of about two companies which had retired before Hannington from Korogwe along the Pangani, returned and showed signs of aggressiveness. Small raiding parties kept interfering with our telegraph line, and convoys between Korogwe and Handeni, and finally, early on the morning of the 13th July, a determined attack was made on the road bridge at Korogwe, which was, however, successfully beaten back.

(26) The time had come to secure my rear and left from this guerilla warfare. Accordingly I ordered the Inspector-General of Communications, General Edwards, to make the following dispositions :—To send part of the 5th Indian Infantry from Tanga along the railway to Muhesa ; to send the 57th Rifles from Korogwe along the railway also to Muhesa, with a small detachment on their left in the direction of Amani ; from Muhesa the 57th Rifles to proceed to the coast at Pangani, which was to be seized in co-operation with the Navy. In the meantime another detachment, under Lieutenant-Colonel C. W. Wilkinson, consisting of Railway Sappers and Miners, Jhind Imperial Service Infantry, and other details, was to proceed from Korogwe down the Pangani River to deal with the enemy force which had attacked the bridge, and which was reported to be at Segera Hill some distance down the right bank of the Pangani. All these movements were duly and successfully executed. At Amani about 25 enemy whites surrendered without opposition. Colonel Wilkinson surprised and defeated the enemy at Segera Hill at dawn on the 15th July, and captured from them a Hotchkiss gun in good order, with ammunition, and thereafter pursued the enemy south towards Hale and Kwa Mugwe (Hoffman's plantation). The 57th, after reaching Muhesa, proceeded to Pangani, which had been previously occupied by the Navy on the 23rd July. In the meantime, as I thought an effort should be made to capture these enemy parties, I had directed General Hannington's brigade to return from Lukigura to Handeni, and from there to march along the old caravan route towards Pangani, so as to intercept the retreating enemy and to clear the country of all raiding parties. He reached Ngambo about midway between Handeni and Pangani on the 21st July, but found the enemy had already slipped through, part proceeding to the coast at Mkwadja, and the greater part retiring south along a track which proceeds by Rugusi and Manga (about 40 miles south-east of Handeni), in a southerly direction towards Mandera, on the Wami River. Accordingly

I ordered General Hannington to send Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Mitchell, with a detachment of the 40th Pathans, after the enemy on this route, and to return with the rest of his brigade, as well as the 57th Rifles, to Lukigura, which was reached in time for them to take part in the operations through the Nguru Mountains. Colonel Mitchell, in the meantime, had overtaken the enemy at Manga, at the same time as a co-operating detachment of the Cape Corps, sent from Kangata; the enemy was beaten and driven south to Mandera. Sadani Bay was occupied by the Navy on the 1st August, and a detachment of the West India Regiment was landed and moved south and then westward towards Mandera to co-operate with Mitchell in clearing the enemy from the lower Wami River. This was successfully carried out, and thereafter the combined force marched south-east to Bagamoyo, which had been brilliantly occupied by the Navy on the 15th August, with the capture of a 4.1 inch naval gun in good order with ammunition. From Bagamoyo this force was to form part of a larger movement for the investment and capture of Dar-es-Salaam. The military operations on the coast and parallel to it were, subject to the I. G. C.'s orders, under the command of Colonel C. U. Price, C.M.G., and were ably carried out.

#### OPERATIONS IN WESTERN LAKE AREA.

(27) To gain a complete picture of the state of the campaign in the northern parts of German East Africa at the end of June it is desirable at this point to consider the operations which were in progress in the west in the neighbourhood of the Great Lakes.

During the months in which my main columns were operating in the Kilimanjaro, Kondo and Usambara areas and pressing their advance to the Central Railway, the "Lake Detachment," consisting of the 98th Infantry, 4th Battalion King's African Rifles, Baganda Rifles, Nandi Scouts, and other small irregular units, had not remained inactive.

Previous to the inception of active operations in East Africa the task originally assigned to the detachment had been the defence of the Uganda and British East Africa frontiers on both sides of Lake Victoria, and this task had been faithfully carried out for many long months. Although no engagement of importance took place, there was constant activity, and minor affairs of posts and patrols on the 300 miles of front were of almost daily occurrence. This necessarily entailed a continued state of vigilance and strain and demanded a high state of efficiency on the part of all ranks. That this was maintained is amply shown by the success achieved whenever opportunity offered. An instance of this had occurred just before my arrival, when the small post of one officer and 35 men at Machumbe had utterly defeated a raid of the enemy, causing him a loss of 3 whites and 22 blacks killed and 1 white and 31 blacks captured.

Apart from the minor operations of the Lake Detachment, my principal concern in the west was to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate the advance of Major-General Tombeur's Belgian forces. As an advance from his headquarters at Kibati, north of Lake Kivu, over the barren region of active volcanoes and in face of strong German opposition was impracticable, an arrangement had been concluded whereby part of General Tombeur's force was to move north-east to Lutobo, in order to advance from there in a southerly direction against Kigali, the capital of the rich German province of Ruanda. To enable him to do so it was also agreed that the base for this force should shift to Bukakata, on Lake Victoria, 150 miles further east, and that we should be responsible for the transport and supply arrangements from this base. Owing to a variety of causes, the organization and execution of these transport and supply arrangements proved a matter of considerable difficulty; and in consequence I sent Brigadier-General the Hon. Sir Charles Crewe, K.C.M.G., C.B., of my staff, to the Lake area to keep in touch with General Tombeur, to advise me in regard to all necessary

requirements, and to push the arrangements on as fast as possible. All difficulties were eventually overcome by General Tombeur and my representatives, and towards the end of April the advanced Belgian column under Colonel Molitor arrived at Kamwezi, 10 miles south-east of Lutobo. Thereafter rapid progress was made, and Kigali was occupied on the 6th May. The occupation of Kigali made the position of the German forces further west on the Belgian border untenable, and enabled General Tombeur to push forward columns both from the north and the south of Lake Kivu. It also became possible for Colonel Molitor's column to resume the advance to the southern end of Lake Victoria, and on the 24th June the Kagera River was reached.

(28) As the Belgian advance towards Lake Victoria progressed during April, May and June, our troops further north on the Kagera line increased their activity against the enemy opposed to them, and began gradually to drive him from his advanced posts. This withdrawal enabled our forces to become more concentrated, and finally it was found possible to release sufficient troops for an operation against Ukerewe Island. This island, the largest in Lake Victoria, lies immediately to the north of the German port of Mwanza, and produces much of the rice which forms the staple diet of a large part of the enemy's native troops. The island is within a few hours of Mwanza, and forms a favourable base for an operation against that town.

The operation for its capture was skilfully carried out on 9th June by Lieutenant-Colonel D. R. Adye, commanding the Lake Detachment, in conjunction with the Naval Flotilla on the lake under Commander Thornley, R.N. The enemy was completely surprised, eight German whites, about 60 blacks, and two small field guns being captured.

(29) As the withdrawal of the enemy from the Northern Kagera River and Karagwe district became accelerated, it also became possible to concentrate our scattered posts in that area into a mobile fighting force which could act more effect-

ively against the retreating enemy. For this purpose, Brigadier-General Sir Charles Crewe was appointed to the Lake command in the middle of June. With his mobile column he first occupied Bukoba and Karagwe districts, and then proceeded south to arrange a combined forward movement with the Belgian forces. The advanced parties of the Belgian column had in the meantime reached Namirembe, at the southwest corner of Lake Victoria, at the end of June, the main body further west being hotly engaged with the German forces retreating from the north. Sir Charles Crewe came to the sound conclusion that the course which promised the best results was a movement of his force against the important fortified town of Mwanza, the occupation of which would give us an excellent base at the south of the Lake for the forward movement of the combined British and Belgian forces to Tabora. Accordingly, on the 9th, 10th, and 11th July, he embarked his force, consisting of about 1,800 rifles, at Namirembe and Ukerewe Island, and on the night of the 11th landed a column under Lieutenant-Colonel C. R. Burgess at Kongoro Point, east of Mwanza, and the following day another column, under Lieutenant-Colonel H. B. Towse, further north at Senga Point. By the skilful disposition and movement of both columns—the one from the east, the other from the north-east—on Mwanza, he made it impossible for the enemy to withstand his advance; and the threat to the enemy's retreat from Burgess' column made the enemy evacuate the town on the 14th July. Most of the whites escaped down the Gulf in the s.s. *Mwanza* and *Heinrich Otto* and the steam pinnace *Schwaben*, with some lighters and boats, while about 400 to 500 *askaris* escaped down the main Tabora road. The enemy destroyed the powerful wireless station, but left a 4.1-inch naval gun in our hands. The pursuit was continued next day, both by a force moving down the Tabora road and by another embarked on the s.s. *Winifred*, which was disembarked some 22 miles south of Mwanza. Some distance south of 5 German whites were cap-

tured, and the enemy steamers and lighters were found abandoned; much baggage and stores and ammunition, a Colt gun, and even much specie were found abandoned by the enemy in his headlong flight. The pursuit was continued as far south as Misungi, opposite the southern end of Stuhmann's Sound. The s.s. *Mwanza* and the lighters have since been salved, and are now in active use. Our total losses in this operation were quite insignificant, while the enemy had been skilfully ousted from one of his most important strongholds. The rapidity with which the enemy abandoned his valuable Lake Provinces and Mwanza was a clear indication that the eventual retreat would not be towards Tabora, but further east towards Dar-es-Salaam, or south towards Mahenge.

#### VAN DEVENTER'S ADVANCE TO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

(30) I now turn back to review the main operations further east, and shall begin with Van Deventer's advance to the Central Railway. On the 24th June the 1st and 3rd Divisions came to a halt at the foot of the Nguru mountains. On the same day Van Deventer, with the 2nd Division, attacked the enemy positions all along the line round Kondoa Irangi and succeeded in occupying them with comparatively small loss. For some time information had been received to the effect that a considerable transference of enemy forces from Kondoa to the Nguru front was in progress, and the enemy at Kondoa had been displaying a certain nervous activity and aggressiveness which are often the prelude of preparations for a retirement. After the action of the 24th June Van Deventer proceeded to collect sufficient transport and supplies for the forward movement to the Central Railway. My orders to him were to clear his right flank towards Ssingida, to move a small column along the Saranda road towards Kilimatinde, and to move his main force towards Dodoma and further east on the road to Mpapua. My object was not only the occupation of the Central Railway, but more

especially the movement of Van Deventer's force to the east so as to get into closer co-operation with the force at the Nguru mountains in dealing with the main enemy forces as they fell back to the Central Railway. Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. Taylor was on 26th July sent with one infantry battalion, one mounted squadron and an artillery section to Ssingida, which, after some skirmishing on the way, was occupied on the 2nd August. A post was left there, and the balance of the column marched south to Kilimatinde. A similar sized column, under Lieutenant-Colonel H. J. Kirkpatrick, was on 14th July sent direct towards Saranda. Little opposition was encountered until they reached Mpondi, about twenty-four miles north-east of Saranda station. Here, in a country covered with very dense bush where scouting was well-nigh impossible, they suddenly found themselves under heavy machine-gun fire from a well-prepared enemy position. There was no alternative but to go straight for the enemy in a frontal attack. The attack was successful, Mpondi was occupied the same afternoon, our losses being eight killed and nine wounded. The advance was continued next day, and on 31st July the Central Railway at Saranda was occupied, as well as Kilimatinde, seven miles further south.

(31) Van Deventer's main column, moving south along the Dodoma road, occupied Chamballa (Jambalo) unopposed on the 18th July and Aneti on the 19th July. The country further south was reported to be waterless and the enemy to be entrenched at the water-holes at Tissa Kwa Meda and Tschenene. Van Deventer therefore divided this force into two columns, and ordered General Manie Botha to move the Mounted Brigade by Tissa Kwa Meda and Njangalo towards Kikombo station on the Central Railway, while General Berange, with two infantry battalions, a motor cycle corps and mounted scouts, was ordered to move by Tschenene and Meia Meia towards Dodoma. On the 25th July Tschenene was occupied with small loss, notwithstanding the strong enemy entrenchments, the success being largely due to the excellent

work of the Armoured Motor Battery, which engaged the enemy at close range. On the 27th July Meia Meia was occupied, and part of an enemy mounted detachment was captured without any loss to us. On the 29th July Berrange occupied the Central Railway at Dodoma.

In the meantime the First Mounted Brigade had occupied Tissa Kwa Meda after a sharp engagement on the 22nd July. From here Brigadier-General Manie Botha, who had rendered great service at the head of this brigade, returned to the Union of South Africa on private business, and his place was taken by Brigadier-General A. H. M. Nussey, D.S.O., who had been Van Deventer's Chief Staff Officer. After occupying Naju and Membe the Mounted Brigade on the 28th July reached Njangalo, where the enemy was driven from a strong position with the loss of a machine gun and 1,500 head of cattle. Kikombo station was reached on 30th July.

(32) By the end of July a hundred miles of the Central Railway was thus in our possession. Practically every bridge or culvert was found blown up, but our advance had been so rapid that the enemy had had no time for further destruction of the track. General Van Deventer spent the following week in concentrating his forces now scattered along the railway from Saranda to Kikombo, at Njangalo, which is on the main road to Mpapua.

In the meantime serious attention was given to the transport and supply situation, which—already grave enough at Kondoa with a transport distance of 200 miles from the Moschi railhead—had now become still graver by the addition of more than a hundred miles, and for the immediate future presented the baffling problem of having to provide for another 120 miles in the advance to Kilossa. How this problem was solved, and Van Deventer's force could be supplied for the advance to Kilossa, and even beyond to the Great Ruaha River, will be explained later.

The concentration of his Division at Njangalo was completed on the 9th August, and the advance was resumed on

that date. But the sequence of events requires me now to turn to the operations through the Nguru mountains.

#### ADVANCE THROUGH NGURU MOUNTAINS.

(33) The general situation in German East Africa in the first week of August may be summarized as follows :—

Van Deventer had occupied the Central Railway from Kilimatinde to Dodoma ; in the Lake area the British and Belgian forces were well south of Lake Victoria and preparing for a combined move towards Tabora. Further west a Belgian force had crossed Lake Tanganyika and occupied Ujiji and Kigoma, the terminus of the Central Railway. In the south-west General Northey's force had occupied Malangali after a brilliant little action, and was prepared to move towards Iringa, seventy miles further north-east. All coast towns as far south as Sadani had been occupied, and a small column was working its way southward to the Wami River and clearing the country between the Nguru mountains and the coast. The time had therefore come for the First and Third Divisions to resume the advance to the Central Railway. Hannington's brigade had rejoined the First, and Enslin's Mounted Brigade had joined the Third Division at Lukigura.

(34) For a distance of about forty-five miles the main road to the Central Railway passes close under the Nguru and Kanga mountains. The enemy had skilfully disposed about twenty companies or 3,000 rifles, with much heavy and light artillery, in the mountains and athwart the main road, which had been entrenched along the numerous foothills which the road crosses. If we forced our way down the road against these formidable obstacles or moved by our left flank through the bush and tall elephant grass, part of the enemy force in the mountains on our right would get behind us and endanger our communications. It was therefore essential to advance by way of the mountains themselves and to clear them as the advance proceeded southward. This could best be done

by wide turning movements through the mountains, which would have the effect of threatening or cutting off the enemy's retreat if he delayed his retirement unduly.

The main block of the Nguru mountains on the west is divided from the Kanga mountain and foothills of Nguru on the east by the rough valley of the Mdjonga River, which flows from Mahassi at the northern entrance to the mountains due south towards Turiani, where the main road round Kângâ crosses it. Into this river two streams run from the northwest through gaps in the Nguru mountains, the one entering the valley near Matamondo, the other by Mhonda Mission Station, near Turiani. Along both these streams rough mountain footpaths pass to the track which follows the course of the Mdjonga River. The enemy held the Mdjonga valley strongly from Mahassi to Turiani, and a turning movement would have to be further west so as to close in either at Matamondo or Mhonda Mission. My information was that both the Mdjonga track and the Mhonda footpaths were capable of carrying wheeled traffic. I therefore decided on the following dispositions for the advance. While General Sheppard's brigade was to make a feint from Msîha camp directly against the enemy's position at Ruhungu, on the main road, he was to move the bulk of his brigade by his left flank so as to arrive at Russongo River, six miles behind the Ruhungu entrenchments. General Hannington's brigade was previously to have moved to Mahassi, and from there, accompanied by General Hoskias, was to advance along and clear the Mdjonga valley. Brits' Division was at the same time to make a detour to the north by the Lukigura valley, and then, turning west through Kimbe, to enter the mountains further west of Mahassi and emerge from the mountains through the Mhonda gap behind the enemy's forces disposed along Kanga and the Mdjonga valley.

(35) On the 5th August General Enslin moved with the 2nd Mounted Brigade from Lukigura via Kimbè, and the following day entered the Nguru mountains some eight miles

west of Mahassi. On the 6th Beves' Brigade followed the same route, while General Hannington marched along mountain footpaths straight from Lukigura to Mahassi. On the 7th General Sheppard moved out from Msiha camp. General Hannington worked his way down the Mdjonga valley and found no strong opposition until he reached Matamondo on the 9th. In the meantime Enslin had been moving rapidly through the mountains, and had arrived in the Mhonda gap and proceeded to occupy Mhonda on the 8th. He sent back word that the route through the mountains was entirely impracticable for wheeled traffic of any description. In consequence all our transport was sent back to Lukigura to follow Sheppard along the main road. Hoskins had also returned to rejoin Sheppard, and in view of the strong opposition Hannington was meeting at Matamondo and the impracticability of the mountains, I directed General Brits to take Beves' brigade down the footpath to Matamondo to reinforce Hannington. One of Enslin's mounted regiments had lost its way in the mountains, and had also finally emerged at Matamondo. With the balance of his brigade, Enslin passed through the Mhonda gap and seized a series of positions across the road by which the enemy had to retire. These, however, he found it impossible to hold in view of the smallness of his force and threatened enemy attacks on his flanks. He, however, maintained his position at Mhonda Mission, and thereby forced the enemy everywhere to abandon his defence in the mountains and retire as fast as he could. If the terrain had permitted of the original scheme being carried out, and the whole Third Division had proceeded to Mhonda, the retreat of the enemy from these mountains would probably have been impossible.

(36) After stubborn fighting at Matamondo on the 10th and 11th the enemy was driven south with great loss, and a machine gun was captured from him. Our loss amounted to about sixty killed and wounded. On the 11th General Sheppard had worked his way through the dense bush round the

enemy positions on the slopes of Kanga and had arrived at the Russongo River only to find the enemy gone. On the 12th I directed him to proceed due south by Mafleta to the Wami River at Kipera so as to be well on the left flank of the retiring enemy; he reached Mafleta on the same day, and on the following day occupied Kipera, where a small enemy patrol was driven off and a light bridge over the Wami was saved. On the 12th and 13th the other brigades had reached Turiani, the enemy having fallen back some miles further south. It was becoming clear that we were now dealing with only part of his force, and that the balance had retired further south towards the Central Railway, either in the direction of Morogoro or Kilossa. Our progress was, however, very much hampered by the numerous rivers flowing from the Kanga and Nguru mountains, over all of which the bridges had been destroyed and had to be rebuilt by us, including some of very considerable dimensions. In spite of this and other difficulties I decided to give the enemy no time, and ordered Enslin's Mounted Brigade to proceed the same day (13th August) round the left flank along the Liwale River to Ngulu on the Mkundi River, where he was to be joined by the 130th Baluchis from Kipera, and thence to make for Kwedihombo and Mwomero, where the roads for Morogoro and Kilossa respectively leave the Nguru mountains. At the same time Hannington's brigade was to work its way south along the main road. On the 15th both these places were occupied by Enslin and Hannington after only slight opposition.

(37) The bulk of the enemy force retired along the Morogoro road towards Dakawa on the Wami River, while a few companies went off along the Kilossa road. General Hannington was ordered to Mwomero to follow the latter to the Mkundi River, while the rest of the force was ordered to follow the enemy to Dakawa. General Sheppard had been ordered to cross the Wami at Kipera and to move his brigade along the right or southern bank of the Wami

to Dakawa crossing. Sheppard and Enslin arrived on opposite banks at the enemy position on the 16th August, but the enemy was strong enough to hold Sheppard at bay some two miles north and at the same time to prevent Enslin from attempting to cross the river, which is both wide and deep. The mounted men got across the river higher up the following day, and the enemy retired precipitately as soon as he discovered the threat to his line of retreat. The Crossing was occupied by us the following morning (18th August). Our losses in this action amounted to about 120, while the enemy had been very severely handled. A halt ensued here, as the bridging of the river was estimated to take four days. During this time Hannington was ordered to move his brigade to Dakawa, and the Cape Corps to take its place in following the retreating enemy party towards Kilossa. This pause provides a suitable opportunity to review Van Deventer's operations along the Central Railway.

VAN DEVENTER'S ADVANCE TO KILOSSA AND GREAT RUAHA  
RIVER.

(38) On 9th August Van Deventer's Division had been concentrated at Njangalo, while the enemy was reported holding Tschunjo Pass with his left on Gulwe and his right on Kongoa. The advance was commenced on that day, and contact was established with the enemy at Tschunjo on the afternoon of the 11th.

The troops had to march from Njangalo to Tschunjo over a waterless area, and went into action without any rest. Fighting continued nearly all night, and next morning the enemy was found to have retired, and was immediately pursued towards Mpapua, where he was again engaged and defeated before nightfall on the same day (12th August). Fighting and marching had been continuous for forty-two miles. The enemy force from Tschunjo to Mpapua consisted of twelve companies supported by artillery. Owing to the difficulties of the country the flanking movements were de-

## APPENDIX VII.

layed and the advance had to depend for progress mainly on frontal attacks.

On the 15th August the enemy was again engaged at Kidete station, holding a strong position. He was supported by machine, field and heavy guns. On the 16th August the engagement at Kidete was continued until late in the day. The enemy was driven out by a flanking movement by the mounted troops who attacked in rear. Our casualties were six killed and thirty-nine wounded.

From 15th August to 22nd August our troops were in daily contact with the enemy, driving him gradually from Kidete along the railway line to Kilossa and Kimamba, which were both entered on the 22nd August, the day before our advance was resumed on the Wami River.

(39) In reporting these arduous operations General Van Deventer says :—

"The railway from Kidete to Kilossa for a distance of twenty-five miles follows a narrow defile cut through the Usugara mountains by the Mkondokwa River; every yard of advance was stubbornly resisted by the enemy. Of the more important engagements those on the 19th at Msagara and on the 21st before Kilossa should be mentioned. In all the actions on this advance the fighting consisted of the enemy receiving our advance guard with one or several ambushes, then falling back on a well-prepared position, and retiring from that on to further well-selected ambush places and positions. All the time our less advanced troops were subjected to vigorous shelling by means of long-range naval guns.

"Since leaving Kondoa Irangi the troops who have reached Kilossa by the shortest route have done at least 220 miles. Those troops who have gone via Kilimatinde and other places have done many more miles. Owing to bad roads, shortage of transport and the rapidity of advance, the adequate rationing of the troops was not possible. The under-feeding and over-working are sadly reflected in their state of

health. Regarding the animals of my Division, the advance from Mpapua to Kilossa was through one continual fly belt, where practically all the animals were infected.

" After the occupation of Kilossa it was ascertained that the enemy held Uleia, twenty miles south, in force, and was being reinforced by troops from the Southern Command, who had opposed General Northey's advance. As my Division was now weakened by the absence of the First Mounted Brigade (less one regiment), which had gone to Mlali on 25th August to co-operate with the Second Mounted Brigade, and as my infantry was in an exhausted condition, the Commander-in-Chief's wire of 26th August, asking for an advance on Kidodi and Kidatu, imposed a task which I had not intended to ask from my troops before they had had some rest. The advance was, however, ordered in accordance with the request of the Commander-in-Chief, the enemy being driven out of Uleia on 26th August and out of Kidodi on 10th September.

" From Uleia to Kidodi the country consists of high mountain ridges running across the road for several miles. These had all been entrenched by the enemy some time ago, so that in the various actions his troops could fall back from one entrenched position to the next, a mile or so in rear. The operations thus called for an extraordinary amount of mountain climbing and constant fighting.

" The slight casualties sustained in the various engagements over an enormous track of country, bristling with dongas and difficulties at every point, were mainly due to the advance being carried out by avoiding as far as possible frontal attacks. Dispositions were made with a view to carry out flanking movements while holding the enemy to the position occupied by him, but this the enemy carefully avoided, and under cover of darkness the engagement was usually broken off and a retreat effected.

" The success with which the whole movement from Kon-doa Irangi to the Central Railway, thence to Kilossa, and on

to the Ruaha River, was carried out is due to the loyal co-operation and splendid spirit displayed by all units under my command.

"It is difficult to express my high appreciation of the conduct and spirit of the troops, who all worked with determination and zeal; their endurance and hardships during long marches through dry and waterless stretches on scanty rations form an achievement worthy of South African troops."

#### OCCUPATION OF MOROGORO AND OF ULUGURU MOUNTAINS.

(40) When the advance through the Nguru mountains began I entertained some hope that, even if we failed in cornering the enemy in those mountains, he might still be brought to bay at Kilossa, on the Central Railway. Our information tended strongly to show that, if the enemy retired from the railway, Mahenge would be his next objective; and as the most convenient point of departure for Mahenge appeared to be Kilossa, there was some justification for the hope that our rapid advance from the north and west might cut the enemy off in the direction of Kilossa. It may, however, have been the rapid progress of Van Deventer towards Kilossa that caused the enemy to retire with his main force towards Morogoro. Whatever the cause, our information did not leave us in any doubt as to the fact that the bulk of the enemy forces had retired to Morogoro. The next move now was to try and bring the enemy to bay at Morogoro, if possible. To this end Enslin, whose brigade had been ordered to the Central Railway on the 21st August and had occupied Mkata station on the 23rd August, was ordered to proceed immediately to Mlali, about fifteen miles south-west of Morogoro, on the road to Kissaka, round the west of the Uluguru mountains. Mlali was successfully occupied by him on the 24th August. General Van Deventer was asked to send the First Mounted Brigade, under General Nussey, to reinforce Enslin so that it would be impossible for the enemy to force his way south

by that route. The next point was so to arrange the advance of our other forces from Dakawa as to block also the road leading from Morogoro by Kiroka, round the eastern slopes of the Uluguru mountains, and thus to bottle the enemy up in Morogoro. I was not then aware that a track went due south from Morogoro through the mountains to Kissaki, and that the capture of the flanks of the mountains would not achieve the end in view. On the morning of the 23rd August our forces crossed the Wami by the now completed bridge, but instead of moving forward to Morogoro we moved backward down the right bank of the Wami for about nine miles, and from there struck due east so as to cross the waterless belt of about twenty-five miles to the Ngerengere River, north-east of Morogoro. Owing to the nature of the country and the bush, the heat, and the absence of water, the march for that and the following day proved one of the most trying of the whole campaign; but on the night of the 24th August we were encamped on the Ngerengere River, in the neighbourhood of Msungulu, some eighteen miles north-east of Morogoro. A mounted detachment under Colonel A. Brink, General Brits' Chief Staff Officer, had preceded us, and had that morning seized Mkogwa Hill, some three miles further south-east on the other side of the river. The move must have been a surprise to the enemy, who, evidently misled by Enslin's march into the belief that the whole force would move to Morogoro by the west, had massed his forces on the road between Dakawa and Morogoro and further west along the railway. Owing to the exhaustion of man and beast, the next day was spent in reconnoitring the country, and on the 26th August the advance was resumed, General Hannington being directed to Mikesse station, twenty miles east of Morogoro, and the brigades of Sheppard and Beves moving up the Ngerengere towards Morogoro. Both places were occupied on the 26th August, only, however, to find that the enemy had gone, the Commander-in-Chief von Lettow and Governor Schnee with a force on the track due south of Morogoro

through the mountains, and another force by the eastern or Kiroka route, while Enslin was engaged with a third force at Mlali. At Morogoro I found many proofs of the precipitate flight and demoralized condition of the enemy forces, and I decided to continue the pursuit in spite of the fact that my forces and animals were worn out with the exertions of the last three weeks and that my transport had reached its extreme radius of action. General Sheppard occupied Kiroka on the 26th, and General Hannington was ordered to continue the advance south after the retreating enemy. By the 30th August the First Division had pressed the enemy over the Ruwu, having been continually engaged with him since the 27th.

(41) It is unnecessary to describe in detail the events of our advance along the eastern slopes of the Uluguru mountains. The enemy fought rearguard actions every day, and held up our advance at every convenient place. Unfortunately the country is very well suited to his tactics. The road passes through very difficult broken foothills, covered either with bush or grass growing from six to twelve feet high, through which any progress was slow, painful and dangerous. The bridging of the Ruwu took several days, and for some distance beyond the road passes along the face of precipitous rocks, round which the enemy had constructed a gallery on piles to afford a track for his transport. As the gallery would not carry our mechanical transport, it took us some days to blast away the mountain side and construct a proper road. The gallery would not carry the 4.1-inch naval gun of the enemy, which was found destroyed near the Ruwu. South of the Ruwu, towards the Mwuna River, our advance proceeded not only along the main road to Tulo, but also on a track to the west of it to Kassanga, and to the east of it by the Tununguo Mission Station. The nature of the country and the continual fighting made our daily progress slow, while road-making and bridging behind engaged the attention, not only of the pioneers, but of a large portion of the troops as

well. Between the Ruwu and Mwuha Rivers the road passes first through swampy country and then over one of the spurs of the Uluguru mountains, which ends with a precipitous face, to the south. Through this spur and down this face a mountain pass was cut in the rock, which took the technical corps, as well as most of General Sheppard's brigade, several weeks, and will remain a notable and enduring engineering feat. Almost every day prisoners were taken, and in one of these daily actions a machine gun was captured. On the 10th September Tulo was occupied, and Hannington's brigade, which was leading the advance, moved on towards Dutumi, where the enemy made a resolute stand for several days, being only finally driven south to the Mgeta River on the 13th September.

(42) I now turn back to review the operations inside and along the western slopes of the Uluguru mountains. As already stated, General Enslin's Mounted Brigade reached Mlali on the 24th August from Mkata station. Early on the morning of that day the advance scouts of the brigade rushed Kisagale Hill, a small isolated hill athwart the road to the south, and captured an ammunition depot of the enemy, in which about one thousand shells for the naval and other guns of the enemy were found. At the same time one of the regiments galloped up the valley to the north of this hill, just as an enemy force was coming down the Morogoro road, and took up positions in the foothills in the immediate neighbourhood. In the afternoon this regiment, after severe fighting, found their positions in the valley untenable, as the enemy was gradually working round them in the hills and bringing converging fire to bear on them. They retired a short distance to the south, but remained in possession of the road. Fighting continued during the following day, and as the enemy found it impossible to dislodge our men from the road, they destroyed two naval guns, one 3.4-inch and the other 4.1-inch, and retired into the mountains towards Mgeta Mission station, which is situated about ten miles further into the mountains.

Leaving their horses behind, the men worked their way after the enemy into the mountains, and on the 27th General Nussey, whose brigade had in the meantime joined that of Enslin, occupied Mgeta Mission, while Enslin's men, who were moving into the mountains in a more southerly direction with the intention of cutting off the retreat of the enemy, had driven them off Hombossa mountain south-west of Mgeta. At this stage I arrived with General Brits at Mlali and ordered Nussey to follow the enemy through the mountains along the course of the Mgeta River, while Enslin was ordered back to the track which proceeds round the west of the mountains by Mssongossi River and Mahalaka to Kissaki at the southern extremity of the mountains. In this march Enslin's brigade was joined by Beves' two infantry regiments and was accompanied by General Brits.

(43) It was clear to me from the vast quantities of heavy gun ammunition captured at this and various other points in the Uluguru that the enemy had intended a long and elaborate defence of these mountains, and that it was the unexpected arrival of General Enslin at Mlali and the audacious and successful pursuit into the mountains, combined with the operations of General Hoskins' Division on the other side of the mountains, that had forced the enemy to abandon his plans and retreat towards Kissaki. Nussey, followed only by porter transport, slowly worked his way southward through the mountains, finding much ammunition abandoned everywhere. General Brits, on arriving at Msson-gossi River, found that it was impossible to take his guns or wagons any further, and from there they had to return to Morogoro and rejoin him later at Kissaki by the eastern route. From Mahalaka to Kissaki he followed the elephant track which had been the route of Burton and Speke's journey into the interior in 1857. On the 5th September the neighbourhood of Kissaki was reached without any serious opposition. Nussey had not yet arrived and, owing to the roughness of the mountains and some damage to his wireless, no com-

munication could be established with him. In spite of this, however, General Brits decided to attack Kissaki on the 7th September. Beves was ordered to follow the footpath southward along the Mgeta into Kissaki, while Enslin, with the mounted men, marched round by the right, so as to attack from the west and south-west. Kissaki was found to be strongly held, the bulk of the enemy being on the right bank of the Mgeta in front of Enslin, while dense bush prevented Beves on the other side of the river from offering any effective assistance to the former. The enemy's superior force therefore found it possible first to threaten Enslin's left flank by moving between him and Beves, and when Enslin weakened his right flank to reinforce his left, the pressure of the enemy again became too strong on his right. He therefore decided to retire at night, having lost nine men killed, twelve wounded and seven captured. Beves was also ordered to withdraw, and the whole force entrenched below Little Whigu hill, six miles north of Kissaki, and awaited the arrival of Nussey. Nussey, who was in ignorance of these events or the position of General Brits, arrived before Kissaki on the morning of the following day, and an action developed, in which he gallantly held his ground against much superior forces till the evening, when General Brits' messengers reached him with an order to withdraw to Little Whigu. His loss had been twenty-three killed and about the same number wounded. Although this action could be heard from Brits' camp, it was found impossible, owing to the ruggedness of the terrain and the thickness of the bush, to go to his assistance. If communication between Brits and Nussey could have been maintained there is no doubt a joint attack would have led to the capture of Kissaki, whereas the two isolated efforts led to a double retirement and a regrettable recovery of enemy morale. It was only on the 15th September, when General Hannyngham had already captured Dutumi, eighteen miles further east, that General Enslin, by a flank movement round the north-east of Kissaki to Dakawa and the threat to cut off

the enemy's retreat to the Rufiji, compelled him to evacuate Kissaki. The enemy had left behind his hospital full of sick and about seventy-two white Germans, but all supplies had been removed or destroyed. The enemy had now been driven everywhere from the Uluguru mountains, and taken up a defensive line along the Mgeta River south of Dutumi, and further to the west astride the road from Kissaki to the Rufiji. The attack against him along this line was not pressed, as our men were exhausted and worn out with ceaseless fighting and marching for several weeks through most difficult country on half rations or less, and a thorough rest was imperatively necessary, not only on military but also on medical grounds.

#### OCCUPATION OF DAR-ES-SALAAM AND OF SOUTH COAST.

(44) Turning now to the coastal operations, which were conducted simultaneously with these movements in the interior, I have already stated that the Navy occupied Bagamoyo on 15th August. At this point General Edwards assembled a force of about 1,800 rifles under Colonel Price for the operations against Dar-es-Salaam. This force was divided into two columns, the smaller one marching south to the Central Railway at the Ruwu bridge with the object, if possible, of seizing that bridge before its destruction by the enemy, and thereafter swinging round towards Dar-es-Salaam; the other and larger column moving down along the coast towards that port. Neither column met any serious opposition on the march, as the enemy, aware of the overwhelming force moving against Dar-es-Salaam, and determined to avoid capture and also anxious to avoid siege operations against a town containing a large German non-combatant population, had decided not to defend the place, and was everywhere falling back before our advance. Ruwu railway bridge was found completely destroyed. South-west of Ruwu a small German force was found, which was driven south with considerable loss, and the column then marched east towards

Dar-es-Salaam. In the meantime the coastal column, after occupying Kondutschi and Msassani Bay, had flung its right wing forward and occupied the Msimbusi River, which flows round Dar-es-Salaam on the west and north. The Navy at the same time appeared before Dar-es-Salaam, and on 3rd September the place surrendered, and was occupied by our forces on 4th September. The enemy forces had left a few days before. One 6-inch gun had been blown up, while the rest of their artillery was taken south. The railway station and harbour works had been effectively destroyed; the s.s. *Tabora*, *König*, and *Mowe* were found sunk in the harbour beyond any hope of being salved; but the *Feldmarschall* has since been recovered, and at comparatively small expense would again be seaworthy. The floating dock is also being salved.

(45) I considered that the time had now come to occupy effectively the whole of the coast, and accordingly made arrangements with the Admiral for convoying forces south and co-operating in the seizure of all important points on the coast south of Dar-es-Salaam. In this way Mikindani (13th September), Ssudi Bay (15th September), Lindi (16th September), Kilwa Kissiwani (7th September), Kilwa Kivinge (commonly called Kilwa) (7th September), and Kiswera were all occupied before the end of September. At Kilwa a strong column was landed for operations, which I proposed to conduct against the enemy from that quarter. This occupation of the southern coast not only helped to pen the enemy up in the interior, but was intended to prevent any assistance from reaching the enemy from oversea.

#### RESTORATION OF CENTRAL RAILWAY.

(46) The restoration of Dar-es-Salaam harbour and the preparation of Kilwa as bases for our operations in the interior are both matters of some difficulty, and requiring some time to complete. Both are being pushed forward with the utmost energy.

This is also the place to refer to the restoration of the Central Railway for our supply purposes. While the railway track was largely left undamaged by the enemy, the bridges had been carefully demolished. Between Kilossa and Dar-es-Salaam alone about sixty bridges, some of very considerable dimensions, had been wrecked. To restore these so as to carry heavy locomotives would take many months, during which period all further operations would have to remain at a standstill, and an unbearable strain would be put on our enormously stretched-out transport lines from Moschi railhead and Korogwe on the Tanga railway. The difficulty had been solved for General Van Deventer by a simple but ingenious device of the South African Pioneers under him. This was to restore the bridges with local material so as to carry a weight of about 6 tons, and to narrow the gauge of our heavy motor lorries so that they could run on railway trolley wheels over the line thus restored. A motor tractor with trailer carries 10 to 15 tons of supplies. In this way General Van Deventer had supplied his division over the railway track for the 120 miles advance from Dodoma to Kilossa, and but for this solution of his transport trouble his advance to the Great Ruaha River at this stage would have been a physical impossibility. As soon as Morogoro was occupied, the same treatment was applied to that section of the line, with the result that since the 6th October the railway track has been open for motor traffic from Dar-es-Salaam to Dodoma, a distance of almost 300 miles, and our forces have been supplied from Dar-es-Salaam as sea base. By the end of October the railway will thus be open for motor traffic to Tabora, and the restoration and strengthening of the line for heavy locomotive traffic, for which heavy material has to come up from the coast, can proceed as circumstances permit.

#### NORTHEY'S ADVANCE.

(47) A word more about the western operations will complete the picture of the military situation in German East

Africa by the middle of October. Brigadier-General E. Nørtheby, A.D.C., whose operations have been conducted with remarkable ability and vigour; occupied Lupembe on 19th August and Iringa on 29th August ; the latter place would have been occupied much earlier but for my advice to him to slow down while the line of retreat of the enemy's forces from the Central Railway was still uncertain. His Lupembe column is now on the Ruhudje River south-west of Mahenge, while his Iringa column is near the Ulanga River north-west of Mahenge. Ssongea in the south has also been occupied. The importance of his role is becoming more accentuated as the campaign progresses and the enemy forces may intend to retire south.

#### ADVANCE TO TABORA.

In the north-west, as already stated, Sir Charles Crewe's advance troops were at Misungi, south of Mwanza, on 16th July, while one Belgian column was farther west near Biaramulo and Namirembe, and a second Belgian column was at Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika on 5th August. It was arranged between General Tombeur and General Crewe that their columns from Lake Victoria should advance simultaneously to St. Michael and Iwingo respectively on the western and eastern roads southward to Tabora. Difficulties of transport supplies and organization delayed their advance so that General Crewe only reached Iwingo on 7th August and Colonel Molitor's Belgian column could not be concentrated at St. Michael before the 22nd August. The British column reached Schinjanga on the 30th August. In the meantime the Belgian Ujiji column under Colonel Olsen had steadily moved forward towards Tabora, and on 1st and 2nd September fought actions with the enemy to the west and south-west of Tabora. General Tombeur therefore decided to push Colonel Molitor's column southward with all possible speed so as to be able to co-operate with Colonel Olsen. Their combined operations caused the enemy to retreat, and the Belgian forces occupied Tabora on the 19th September, while a week later General

Crewe's advanced troops occupied the railway at Igalulu, east of Tabora. The enemy retired in two columns—one under General Wahle eastward along the railway and then southward to the Itumba Mountains; the other under Wintgens southward via Sikonge. At the time of writing this report both columns are approaching the Great Ruaha River north, and west respectively of Iringa, and Northey's and Van Deventer's patrols are in touch with them. Their object is evidently to form a junction with the main enemy forces further east.

#### PORtUGUESE ADVANCE.

In the extreme south General Gil with a Portuguese force has crossed the Rovuma River and occupied certain strategic points to the north of it.

The net result of all these operations at the moment of writing is that the Germans have been driven south over the Central Railway and are now disposed as follows:—In the north-east, on the Rufiji River and about 30 miles to the north of it; in the west, along or south and east of the Great Ruaha River and Ulanga River. With the exception of the Mahenge plateau, they have lost every healthy or valuable part of their colony. In the east they are cut off from the coast, and in the south the Portuguese army has appeared north of the Rovuma River.

#### BEHAVIOUR OF TROOPS.

(48) It would seem fit and proper to add a few words in recognition of the work done by the officers and men whom I have the honour to command. But in view of the foregoing statement of the main facts eulogy seems unnecessary and misplaced. The plain tale of their achievements bears the most convincing testimony to the spirit, determination, and prodigious efforts of all ranks. Their work has been done under tropical conditions which not only produce bodily weariness and unfitness, but which create mental languor

and depression, and finally appal the stoutest hearts. To march day by day, and week by week, through the African jungle or high grass, in which vision is limited to a few yards, in which danger always lurks near but seldom becomes visible, even when experienced, supplies a test to human nature often in the long run beyond the limits of human endurance.

And what is true of the fighting troops applies in one degree or another to all the subsidiary and administrative services. The efforts of all have been beyond praise, the strain on all has been overwhelming. May the end soon crown their labours.

#### SPECIAL SERVICES.

(49) I am particularly indebted to the following for their services during the operations :—

Major-General A. R. Hoskins, C.M.G., D.S.O., who has commanded the 1st Division and has rendered me the greatest services by the ability and loyal manner in which he has carried out my orders.

Major-General J. L. Van Deventer, at the head of the 2nd Division, was throughout these operations in command of a widely detached movement, which he conducted in a manner worthy of the highest praise.

Major-General C. J. Brits, in command of the 3rd Division, has invariably co-operated loyally and ably in carrying out my wishes as intended.

Brigadier-General S. H. Sheppard, D.S.O., has, in addition to his services at the head of his brigade, used his great engineering capabilities to the best advantage on many occasions, thereby enabling our advance to proceed unchecked.

Brigadier-General J. A. Hannington has proved his worth as a commander in the Field, having been very largely employed in carrying out independent operations.

Brigadier-General P. S. Beves has sustained his high soldierly record, and the 2nd South African Infantry Brigade

under him has borne more than its due share of the labours and hardships of the campaign.

Brigadier-General C. A. L. Berrange, C.M.G., at the head of the 3rd South African Infantry Brigade, has rendered excellent service with the 2nd Division and taken a leading share in all the hard work performed by that Division.

Brigadier-General B. G. L. Enslin, by carrying out two arduous turning movements with his mounted brigade, largely contributed to the rapid clearing of the Nguru and the Ulu-guru Mountains.

Brigadier-General A. H. M. Nussey, D.S.O., has rendered distinguished service, first as General Van Deventer's Chief Staff Officer, and subsequently in command of the 1st Mounted Brigade, in succession to Brigadier-General Manie Botha.

Brigadier-General the Honourable Sir C. P. Crewe, C.B., K.C.M.G., rendered very useful service, first in organizing the transport and supply arrangements for General Tombeur's force from Lake Victoria, and subsequently in commanding our advance to Mwanza and Tabora.

My heartiest thanks are due to Rear-Admiral E. F. B. Charlton, C.B., and all ranks of the Royal Navy for the very able and thorough manner in which they have furthered my plans, not only by occupying points on the coast, sometimes even without military assistance, but by enabling a change of base to be carried out first to Tanga and then to Dar-es-Salaam.

The work of the Air Services has been most creditable. In addition to their reconnaissance work, there is evidence to the effect that both material and moral damage has been done to the enemy by their constant bombing raids.

I have already alluded to the amount of engineering work that has had to be carried out. Both in bridge building and road making the engineers and pioneers with the force have worked ~~very~~ hard, and rendered very valuable service.

The Royal Artillery has invariably made the most of any

opportunities that have offered for assisting the advance of the infantry.

The Supply and Transport Services have spared no effort to cope with the enormous distances and the difficulties entailed in campaigning in such a vast and undeveloped country.

The manner and rapidity with which the repairs to the Tangā and Central Railways have been effected reflect great credit on all ranks of the Railway Services, and in this connection I should like especially to bring to notice the service rendered by Lieutenant-Colonel C. W. Wilkinson, of the Railway Sappers and Miners, and Major J. H. Dobson, of the South African Pioneers, in carrying out the temporary repairs to the Central Railway which have enabled the troops in the interior to be supplied from Dar-es-Salaam practically within a month of its occupation.

The work of the Medical Units has been very heavy, and all ranks have done their utmost in their care of sick and wounded and in arranging for their speedy evacuation.

The Ordnance Service is to be congratulated on having so successfully met the very varied calls made on it, which success bears testimony to the excellent organization of that Service.

Great credit is due to the Signal Service for the really excellent way in which communication has been maintained. The operations have been carried on by three widely separated forces, which have each been again sub-divided into two or more columns, and this has strained the resources of the Service to its furthest limits. It has only been by unremitting efforts that success has been achieved.

My thanks are due to the various Political Officers who have accompanied the columns, and by their work materially assisted the operations by helping to gain the confidence of the natives, which is so important a feature in a campaign of this nature.

The Officers of my Staff have given me every assistance.

## APPENDIX VII.

I would again especially mention the very great debt which I owe to Brigadier-General J. J. Collyer, C.M.G., my Chief of the General Staff, and to Brigadier-General R. H. Ewart, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., A.D.C., Administrative Staff, for the tireless energy and unfailing tact with which they have carried out their respective duties, thereby relieving me of all detail work and leaving me free to devote myself solely to the prosecution of the campaign.

Brigadier-General W. F. S. Edwards, D.S.O., has continued to render valuable services as Inspector-General of Communications, and has from time to time had control of minor operations on lines of communication, which he has always handled to my entire satisfaction.

(5c) A dispatch giving the names of the officers and men whose services I also desire to bring to your notice is in course of preparation, and will follow at a later date.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

J. C. SMUTS, Lieutenant-General,  
Commander-in-Chief,  
East African Force.

ESTABLISHED 1798



T. NELSON  
& SONS, LTD.  
PRINTERS AND  
PUBLISHERS